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Platonic Reflections in Apuleius

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Platonic Reflections in Apuleius

Abstract

Apuleius is often considered to be a Latin sophist, a master of narratological and hermeneutic games, with no particular philosophical agenda. But complexity and playfulness are not necessarily synonymous with intellectual or moral emptiness. Indeed, Apuleius' self-proclaimed Platonism links him to a figure whose very choice of medium, the dialogue, always plays philosophical games with the reader. This dissertation shows that Apuleius engages with Plato on a deeper level than has previously been thought, framing both his own texts and those of Plato in terms of a high-stakes choice to the reader in the spirit of the 'choice of Heracles'. I focus on Apuleius' use of the mirror trope – a trope he inherits from Plato but refracts through the Roman literary tradition. I argue that when Lucius looks into mirrors in the *Metamorphoses*, such as the mirroring water of Byrrhena's atrium or the catoptric hair of the maid-servant Photis, Apuleius invites the reader into a complex game of identification and criticism. Lucius' specular contemplation, though he attempts to fashion it after idealized Platonic mirroring encounters, begins to appear more like the delusional mirror-gazing of Ovid's Narcissus or Seneca's Hostius Quadra upon further analysis. Readers, who have been tricked into participating in a shared voyeurism with Lucius, are compelled to see themselves at the same time as they see Lucius in the mirror. At that moment, the reader is put into a kind of Platonic bind, whereby he or she is forced to choose whether or not to continue following Lucius into voyeuristic delusion.

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PLATONIC REFLECTIONS IN APULEIUS

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Jeffrey P. Ulrich

uxori carissimae, Alexandra

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ABSTRACT

PLATONIC REFLECTIONS IN APULEIUS

Jeffrey P. Ulrich

Emily Wilson

Apuleius is often considered to be a Latin sophist, a master of narratological and hermeneutic games, with no particular philosophical agenda. But complexity and playfulness are not necessarily synonymous with intellectual or moral emptiness. Indeed, Apuleius' self-proclaimed Platonism links him to a figure whose very choice of medium, the dialogue, always plays philosophical games with the reader. This dissertation shows that Apuleius engages with Plato on a deeper level than has previously been thought, framing both his own texts and those of Plato in terms of a high-stakes choice to the reader in the spirit of the 'choice of Heracles'. I focus on Apuleius' use of the mirror trope – a trope he inherits from Plato but refracts through the Roman literary tradition. I argue that when Lucius looks into mirrors in the *Metamorphoses*, such as the mirroring water of Byrrhena's atrium or the catoptric hair of the maid-servant Photis, Apuleius invites the reader into a complex game of identification and criticism. Lucius' specular contemplation, though he attempts to fashion it after idealized Platonic mirroring encounters, begins to appear more like the delusional mirror-gazing of Ovid's Narcissus or Seneca's Hostius Quadra upon further analysis. Readers, who have been tricked into participating in a shared voyeurism with Lucius, are compelled to see themselves at the same time as they see Lucius in the mirror. At that moment, the reader is put into a kind

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INTRODUCTION:

The last 30 years have been kind to Apuleius. He has experienced a renaissance paralleled by few authors in antiquity. Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* – an Odyssean tale of Lucius, a man-turned-ass on a journey to a place he cannot call home – has undergone its own journey from the periphery of most Classics reading lists to becoming a central text for understanding the fascinating syncretism and intellectual culture of the Imperial Era and the Second Sophistic.¹ Once a curiosity of North African descent, destined only for a few curious readers who were themselves on the periphery of academic circles, this text was transformed into a holy grail for post-modern interpretation in the wake of Jack Winkler's 1985 aporetic, narratological reading.² Apuleius himself underwent a metamorphosis from a not-so-astute Platonist, who could not help flaunting his education in bursts of unrestrained stylistic flourishes, to a highly adept player of hermeneutic games, whose "controlled gamesmanship" reveals the underlying un-interpretability of all

¹ See, e.g., the opening of Vincent Hunink's BMCR review of Regine May's commentary of *Metamorphoses* 1 (Hunink 2014): "The *Metamorphoses* by the second-century Latin author Apuleius of Madauros, once considered a curious work well outside the scope of the average classicist, has meanwhile gained the status of an all-time classic. The publication of Maaike Zimmerman's long awaited OCT edition of the novel...in 2012 marks the end of this process".

² The continued influence of Winkler 1985 on Apuleius studies can be seen not only in the outpouring of commentaries, translations, and texts produced since this seminal study (Groningen commentaries on 10 out of 11 books of the *Metamorphoses*, a two volume Loeb of the *Metamorphoses* (Hanson 1989), four translations of the *Metamorphoses* into English (Walsh 1994; Kenney 1998; Relihan 2008; Ruden 2011), a Cambridge commentary on *Cupid & Psyche* (Kenney 1990), an *Oxford Classical Text* on the *Metamorphoses* (Zimmerman 2012), a forthcoming Teubner on the *Metamorphoses*, a new Aris and Phillips commentary on *Metamorphoses* 1 (May 2013), a forthcoming Teubner on the *Apologia*, a text and commentary on the *Apologia* (Hunink 1997), two texts and commentaries on the *Florida* (Hunink 2001; Lee 2005), and a forthcoming text, translation, and commentary on *de Platone et eius Dogmate* (Fowler 2016)) or in the number of monographs on this previously fringe author (Sandy 1997; Finkelpearl 1998; Harrison 2000a; May 2006; Graverini 2007; Fletcher 2014; Tilg 2014, just to name a few), but also in the variety of interpretive lenses employed to illuminate the complexities of this author (cf. the list of Apuleius' identities Fletcher notes in the scholarship (Fletcher 2014, 7 n. 17), of which N  nez's "Apuleius: Orator MetMetasophisticus" (N  nez 2009) is perhaps the most creative). The 2015 SCS panel *libros me futurum* dedicated to Winkler's memory and the sheer number of papers on Apuleius delivered at the 2015 ICAN conference further reveal *Auctor et Actor*'s far reaching effect.

texts.³ In lieu of the traditional literary-critical questions of unity and disunity of Apuleius' masterpiece,⁴ Winkler taught readers to look at the *Metamorphoses* as a kind of detective novel, which lays about hidden clues for its readers to find, and by doing so, teaches them about the process of interpretation through retrospective reading. In the end, though, Winkler's answer to the question "whodunit?", which he raises as the detective novel parallel for the aporetic conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*, leaves criticism with a rather unsatisfying non-answer. That is, the main question that has long bothered interpreters of this text is the problem of how seriously one ought to read Lucius' surprise conversion and life-style change in book 11⁵; Winkler's answer, which is characteristic of interpretation from the 80's but which has nonetheless put Apuleius scholarship in a kind of double bind ever since, is essentially: 'however seriously you like'. Thus, already hidden in Winkler's aporetic reading was the cynical or satirical interpretation of the ending, which merely masqueraded as an "open" interpretation.

As a consequence of Winkler's revolutionary (albeit noncommittal) model of retrospective reading, a number of treatments of Apuleius' whole oeuvre were undertaken, including of philosophical works whose authenticity is still open to debate.⁶ With an increasing cynicism toward any serious philosophical or religious meaning behind Apuleius' words, the texts of the *Florida* and the *Apologia* were labeled the work

³ See Winkler 1985, 170 for the phrase.

⁴ A style of criticism for which the title of Gerald Sandy's 1978 article, 'Book 11: Ballast or Anchor?', could be taken as representative. On pre- and post-Winklerian studies of the unity, disunity, and/or composition of the *Metamorphoses*, see Schlam and Finkelpearl 2001, 45-78.

⁵ A previous formulation of this problem is that the *Metamorphoses* does not prepare the reader for Lucius' conversion, as a proper *Entwicklungsroman* ought to. Rather, the narrative foists a newly transformed Lucius on the reader, even though he was happily indulging in bestiality just a few chapters prior in book 10. For representative readings of this position, see Walsh 1968 and Sandy 1978.

⁶ On questions of authenticity of *de Platone et eius Dogmate*, see n. 82 below. For the most recent discussion of *de Mundo* and its authenticity, see Fletcher 2014.

of a “Latin Sophist” exaggerating his παιδεία and cultural knowledge for personal advantage⁷; the philosophical works, on the other hand, such as *de Platone*, *de deo Socratis*, and even the possibly spurious *de Mundo*, remained the product of a middle-of-the-road, hack philosopher, who only on occasion revealed a literary sensibility. Gerald Sandy, for instance, disregarding Winkler entirely in his attempt to situate Apuleius in the broader Greek context,⁸ seemed to land on a rather ambivalent and noncommittal stance of his own: Apuleius was the product of an era of mediocre scholasticism and “ossified conventions”, “slavishly adhering to the lessons of writing and speech manuals”⁹; and yet, at many moments in the *Metamorphoses*, “one finds...subtleties worthy of Alexandrian writers and their Roman disciples in the Augustan period”.¹⁰

Stephen Harrison’s 2000 monograph, *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist*, which very quickly acquired a status verging on an introductory textbook for the state of Apuleius studies, took a similar approach to Sandy’s in attempting to situate Apuleius in the Second Sophistic. Harrison’s conclusion, though less ambivalent and more closely tied to textual exegesis than Sandy’s, is nevertheless equally dismissive of Apuleius’ intellectual abilities and philosophical commitment. In Harrison’s view, Apuleius’ self-description as

⁷ See, e.g., Stephen Harrison’s review of Gerald Sandy’s 1997 monograph (Harrison 2000b), in which there is talk of Apuleius’ “exaggerated” knowledge of Greek, “exaggerated” travels, etc.

⁸ See the just criticism of Harrison 2000b.

⁹ Sandy 1997, 63. For a harsher articulation of the same sentiment, see the rather condemning assessment of John Dillon, in which he manages to strike a blow against Middle Platonism and the Middle West of America at the same time: the period between 80 BCE and 220 CE in the history of Platonism “seems fated to remain in the position of those tedious tracts of the Mid-Western United States through which one passes with all possible haste, in order to reach the excitements of one coast or the other. In Platonism, likewise, one tends to move all too hastily from Plato to Plotinus, with, at most, a perfunctory glance at those vast tracts of Academic scholasticism that lie between the two, and which were of such basic importance in the intellectual formation of the latter” (Dillon 1977, xiii, quoted in Fletcher 2014, 38). This assessment is still generally held to be true; though for a recent attempt to recover the literary value of the somewhat dry texts of Apuleius’ corpus, see Fletcher 2014.

¹⁰ Sandy 1997, 252.

a *Platonicus philosophus* in the *Apologia* and the *Florida* can be seen as a moniker he adopts merely for the purposes of sophistic display and self-fashioning. When Apuleius makes learned allusions to highbrow literature of the Greek and/or Roman past, moreover, he does so with the aim of adding a little literary flavor to his otherwise “low” text merely for the enjoyment of more well-educated members of his readership. Adopting a view of Apuleius that, like Winkler’s, makes him suspiciously similar to present-day academics with all the attendant anxieties of self-presentation and scholarly success, Harrison strips Apuleius of any serious purpose and transforms him into a modern satirist, mocking the religious elite in a manner one might expect from a 20th century talking head. Regine May, a student of Harrison, then took this assessment one step further by trying to connect Apuleius’ oeuvre to ancient comedy, particularly in his diction and his interactive relationship with the reader.¹¹ Though a very valuable resource in terms of nuanced and studied intertextual readings, May’s monograph takes for granted the same basic premise as Harrison’s – a premise for which there is ample evidence to the contrary in antiquity: according to this school, comedy, whether in the ancient world or the modern, cannot also be serious.¹²

Apuleius scholarship, however, has not remained in a state of unquestioned ἀπορία or complete cynicism. In a series of publications, beginning with Luca Graverini’s *Le Metamorfosi di Apuleio. Letteratura e identità* and continuing into the present with monographs and commentaries as recent as 2015, a new brand of “serio-

¹¹ See May 2006.

¹² One may cite as evidence to the contrary the programmatic claim of the chorus in Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (391-2): καὶ πολλὰ μὲν γέλοιά μ’ εἰπεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ σπουδαῖα (“Let me say many funny things, but also many serious things”).

comic” interpretation has been developed. Since Graverini pioneered a new way of looking at the *Metamorphoses* – as a kind of generic mixture of pleasurable and serious elements – the *communis opinio* has started to shift, with Apuleius scholarship making more room both for a serious interpretation of Lucius’ conversion and for Apuleius’ genuine philosophical commitments writ large across the corpus. In this vein, three publications from the last two years – two monographs published by Oxford and Cambridge, respectively, and a new Groningen commentary on the Isis book¹³ – demonstrate a general desire amongst Apuleius scholars to push back against the faux-“open” reading of Winkler, which deceptively hid the ultimately cynical reading that was to be championed in the late 90’s and early 2000’s. However, a closer analysis of the two monographs with a particular focus on the type of “serious” interpretation they promulgate reveals just how large the ghost of Winkler looms in Apuleius criticism.

Stefan Tilg initially tries to pass the religious ending of book 11 off on the *Μεταμορφώσεις* written by Lucius of Patrae, of which Apuleius’ Latin *Metamorphoses* is generally agreed to be a loose translation.¹⁴ The evidence for such a conjecture is speculative at best, and does not really manage to address the central concerns of Apuleius scholarship in contending with Winklerian ἀπορία. Then, when Tilg addresses the “serious” element of the “seriocomic” interpretation in chapter 5 – a feature he has already undercut by taking away Apuleius’ agency in constructing the Isis book – he quickly dispenses with his arguments in favor of a serious reading in “under two pages”.

¹³ See Tilg 2014, Fletcher 2014, and *GCA* 2015.

¹⁴ See chapter 1 of Tilg 2014, “The Model: Religious *Metamorphoseis*”. For a fuller discussion of the issues of translation of Lucius of Patrae’s original *Metamorphoseis*, see Graverini 2012, 42-50 and Tilg 2007.

As a reviewer justly complains, Tilg, while claiming to endorse a “serio-comic” interpretation, seems to land on “the deconstructionist interpretative tradition of the *Metamorphoses* that refuses definitive solutions”.¹⁵

On the other hand, Richard Fletcher, whose study of Apuleius’ whole corpus explicitly eschews interpretation of the *Metamorphoses* as an end game for reading the oeuvre,¹⁶ takes a different tack to support the notion that Apuleius was a serious Platonist, namely, by arguing that Platonism in antiquity was as much an aesthetic movement as it was a set of doctrinal principles.¹⁷ However, while I certainly agree with the sentiment, this alone fails once again to address the questions scholars are asking when they investigate the serious philosophical or religious commitments of this notoriously elusive figure from antiquity.¹⁸ Interpreters do not wonder what Apuleius *thought* being a Platonist meant, but rather, whether he could be correctly categorized as one in a pre-

¹⁵ For the full quotation, see Andreadakis 2015, 4-5: “...the serious reading is seriously downplayed, in fact, as it is analyzed in under two pages...T[ilg] concludes by stating that the serious and the comic approaches to such a complex work are precarious when one considers the trickiness of such definitions...While this view is certainly well argued, it is not a solution to the question of what is the more appropriate reading mode for Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. In that sense then it would appear that T[ilg] associates with the deconstructionist interpretative tradition of the *Metamorphoses* that refuses definitive solutions.”

¹⁶ See Fletcher’s criticism of other corpus-wide studies of Apuleius and their teleological approach to the *Metamorphoses*: “The *Metamorphoses* is the undisputed masterpiece of the Apuleian corpus. It is often read separately from Apuleius’ other works, and discussed in relation to other ancient novels and a range of traditions of Greek and Roman poetry and prose. Even when the other works of the Apuleian corpus are discussed, the shadow of the *Metamorphoses* looms so large that it demands to be not only the end-point of the discussion of the whole corpus, but also the rationale for discussion of the corpus. In many ways, the other works of the Apuleian corpus, and even the very idea of an Apuleian corpus, have been understood as acting as so many footnotes to the *Metamorphoses*” (Fletcher 2014, 3). Though, at p. 5, Fletcher acknowledges and responds to the potential criticism that he too concludes his survey of the corpus with a study of the *Metamorphoses*: “...if you read my table of contents, you see that I too conclude my study of the corpus with a discussion of the *Metamorphoses*. Yet, as my own scrupulous reader will ascertain, unlike other comparable corpus-wide surveys, this book positions the novel as neither providing a τέλος nor a legitimating rationale for my reading of the rest of the corpus; rather, *Met.* And its discussion act as a postscript or epilogue and, for my ideal reader, signal work still yet to come.”

¹⁷ To demonstrate this idea, Fletcher brings in Walter Pater’s conception of Platonism (Fletcher 2014, 9-12), a return to 19th century aesthetics reminiscent of Martindale 2005.

¹⁸ For my fuller assessment of Fletcher’s *Apuleius’ Platonism*, see my forthcoming review in *Gnomon*.

existing taxonomy. So, while Fletcher’s approach of analyzing Platonism as a “methodology” helpfully calls into question the scholarly impulse to develop taxonomies and periodizations, his analysis also does not manage to escape the ἀπορία of Winkler, whom Fletcher drags in as a kind of *deus ex machina* in his last (and only) chapter on the *Metamorphoses*. Indeed, chapter 5, “A Narratology for Philosophy”, closes rather unsatisfyingly with four pages of large block quotations from *Auctor et Actor* (supplemented with a few endorsements from Fletcher between each),¹⁹ and with one final homage to Winkler, who started us down this aporetic journey. Thirty years later, therefore, Apuleius scholarship is still contending with the ghost of Winkler whenever people approach anything verging on a serious interpretation of Apuleius *qua* philosopher or of the *Metamorphoses* as a potentially didactic text.

This dissertation takes its starting point from an idea that is latent in Richard Fletcher’s work, but one that I think could offer a different solution to Winkler’s “open” reading – a solution different in kind but not in underlying sentiment. At least part of the reason Apuleius scholars have failed to move beyond Winkler’s hermeneutic games, according to which readers see in the novel whatever they already wanted to see, is that we have simply left unquestioned the appropriateness – not to mention anachronism – of the analogy Winkler draws between the *Metamorphoses* and detective stories. Beguiled by the ingenuity of the comparison, scholars have refused to point out that, in an effort to make Apuleius a modern, Winkler turned him into a visionary, producing not merely a new genre, the novel, but a very specific sub-genre of the novel that would not recur again in the same form until the late 19th century. Rather than endorse such an

¹⁹ Fletcher 2014, 283-6.

anachronistic comparison, I would prefer to rework the idea of a “conversion to philosophy”, which Fletcher alludes to but does not fully develop when describing Plato’s choice in *de Platone* to follow Socrates rather than to pursue a life of poetic and literary success.²⁰ Indeed, “conversion” becomes an implicit explanatory mechanism that drives Fletcher’s interpretation of the whole Apuleian corpus. “Conversion”, however, may strike a first-time reader of *Apuleius’ Platonism* as a tendentiously chosen concept,²¹ especially given Fletcher’s claim to avoid an interpretation of the corpus that has the *Metamorphoses* as its τέλος. Thus, instead of retaining “conversion” for fear that it may point too conveniently to Lucius, I will argue in this dissertation that Apuleius poses to readers a high-stakes choice between pleasurable and serious lifestyles and modes of reading. This is essentially the choice implied by the word “conversion”; but to offer a truly “open” reading, it will be more useful to avoid such a religiously inflected term. Unlike detective novels (or conversion narratives, for that matter), high-stakes choice narratives, such as Hesiod’s “two roads” in the *Works and Days* or Prodicus’ famous “choice of Heracles”, have a rich philosophical and literary history in antiquity,²² and in fact, become an even more regularly invoked *topos* in Apuleius’ time.²³ Thus, if we

²⁰ See Fletcher 2014, 65 (*et passim*): “The teleology of Plato’s *conversion* to philosophy at the feet of Socrates is further marked by Apuleius’ account of his youthful education” (my italics).

²¹ The term “conversion” may also recall Nancy Shumate’s helpful reading of the novel in *Crisis and Conversion in Apuleius’ Metamorphoses* (Shumate 1996). Her monograph, however, falls prey to the same criticism of anachronism that I raised against Winkler’s analogy to detective stories. That is, she uses “conversion” narratives as a critical lens, even though Augustine’s *Confessions*, written significantly later than the *Metamorphoses*, is the earliest analogue. Otherwise, she relies heavily on William James’ analysis of Tolstoy’s *Confession* as well as on other modern crisis and conversion narratives. Again, if we rework the idea of conversion to represent a process – i.e., an initial choice and a subsequent series of choices – rather than a sudden transition from one state of being to another, it may approximate more closely what I am aiming for in appealing to “choice narratives” contemporary with Apuleius’ novel.

²² See the discussion of Hunter 2014a on the *Nachleben* of Hesiod’s “two roads”.

²³ See, e.g., Plutarch’s *Quo modo quis sentiat*, Lucian’s *Somnium*, *de Domo*, pseudo-Lucian’s *Amores*, Maximus of Tyre’s *Oration* 18, just to name a few. I will discuss these at greater length below.

consider Apuleius' oeuvre (with particular emphasis on the *Metamorphoses*) as a choice posed to the reader – a choice between virtue and pleasure, between serious and comic, between philosophy and satire – then we can claim the support not only of literary history but also of philosophical interpretations of literature contemporary to Apuleius. In this way, an “open” reading of Apuleius' oeuvre begins to resemble a Platonic rather than Winklerian ἀπορία – a choice over which path one ought to pursue rather than a hermeneutic conundrum that reveals just how meaningless everything is.

I take as the organizing principle of this dissertation one of the defining features of a true “philosopher” that Apuleius identifies in the *Apologia*. At the end of his defense speech, when addressing all of the charges against him in an impressive rhetorical display, Apuleius summarizes each charge in two words and then responds to each with a two-word answer. When he comes to the charge *specula inspicis* – “you look into mirrors” – Apuleius gives his pithy response: *philosophus debet* – “a philosopher ought to” (*Apol.* 103). Indeed, over the course of the whole *Apologia*, Apuleius attempts to portray himself as participating in a series of venerable philosophical pursuits – rather than suspicious activities associated with magic – which his accusers merely misunderstand due to their lack of education.²⁴ Gazing into the *speculum*, a tool of self-speculation, which can lead to self-knowledge and the acquisition of beautiful virtue, becomes the philosophical endeavor *par excellence* in his defense. It is for this reason

²⁴ On the underlying magical implications of most of the subsidiary charges in the *Apologia*, see Hunink 1997, 21 (*et passim*): “...many topics appear to be far less innocent and frivolous as they seem at first sight. In many cases a link with magic may be observed, although Apuleius takes great pains to deny or ignore this...” On Apuleius' tactic of “Platonizing magic”, see Fletcher 2014, 199-218.

that he calls in a whole host of philosophers of ethics and natural science to legitimize his ownership and use of a *speculum* in chapters 15-16 of the *Apologia*.

Indeed, the *locus* of choice in the *Apologia* is the mirror: whether or not to look into a mirror, how one ought to look into a mirror, and what it means to reflect and to respond to what is reflected there. As I discuss in the first chapter of the dissertation, Apuleius portrays his main accuser, Aemilianus, as one who has failed to read and to mirror-gaze, and therefore, as one who has not acquired virtue through the philosophical marvel inspired by the *speculum*. The series of life-choices that led Aemilianus to the wrong life all relate to mirroring (and reading). However, what is problematic with the *speculum* more generally is not only *whether* one chooses to mirror-gaze, but *how* one goes about looking. This device, which Apuleius so innocently portrays as a philosophical tool, actually had deeply ambivalent implications in antiquity, being a device used by women for erotic adornment and seduction, an implement of magical practice and metamorphosis, and only by extension of these first two associations, a philosophical tool for self-improvement.²⁵ In literature, the κάτοπτρον (in Greek) or *speculum* (in Latin) proved to have a rich symbolic significance and was thus used to describe many phenomena in the ancient world – wine,²⁶ poetry,²⁷ time,²⁸ Homer's *Odyssey*,²⁹ painting,³⁰ exemplary viewing,³¹ self-knowledge³², etc.

²⁵ On the various symbolic associations of the *speculum* in antiquity, see McCarty 1989. Cf. the helpful taxonomy of Taylor 2008. Both works will be discussed in more detail below.

²⁶ See Aesch. fr. 393 Radt.

²⁷ See Pind. *Nem.* 7.12-7.

²⁸ See Eur. *Hipp.* 428-30.

²⁹ See Alcidas *apud* Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.3.

³⁰ See the discussion of *mimesis* in Plato's *Republic* 10; cf. Halliwell 2002 for further discussion of the comparison.

³¹ See Terence's *Adelph.* 415-7, on which, see below.

From the perspective of a Platonist, on the one hand, the mirror had the potential to be dangerous – to trap or ensnare viewers in a kind of distorted illusion that Plato likens to consorting with a courtesan³³; but on the other hand, even in Platonic discourse, the *speculum* could provide to a viewer self-knowledge or a transcendent experience of the forms.³⁴ From a thorough study of the catoptric tradition and Apuleius’ manipulation of it, we will see exactly what is at stake in looking into mirrors, and in viewing more generally. In the chapters that follow, we will see how the *speculum*’s polyvalent associations make it a perfect literary device to set up and establish a choice for the reader: when we look into the various mirrors Apuleius holds up for readers, do we see ourselves in them, as Plato’s beloved does in the eyes of his lover, or do we indulge in the delusions of a Narcissus or a Hostius Quadra figure? Perhaps most importantly, at a fundamental level, the mirror is a device that enables viewers to see sights from which they are normally barred. Thus, the *speculum* is a uniquely apt metaphor for voyeurism – arguably, the theme of the *Metamorphoses* – as it allows whoever looks into it to see the one sight to which s/he has not been granted access; in turn, the vanity, self-love, and/or delusion that mirror-gazing begets is very often akin to the harmful effects of voyeuristic curiosity. After deciphering Apuleius’ manipulation of various mirror traditions in the *Apologia* and in particular, analyzing his engagement with Platonic strands of these specular associations, we will turn to the mirroring scenes of the *Metamorphoses* and

³² See Plato’s *Phaedr.* 255d3-5. Cf. Bartsch 2006 for an analysis of how the self-knowledge trope plays out in Latin literature.

³³ See *Rep.* 10.603a10-b2. On this passage and Apuleius’ engagement with it in the *Apologia*, see chapter 2.

³⁴ We will see versions of this kind of mirroring in chapters 1 and 3, when we analyze the mirror of another person’s eyes, as discussed in *Alcibiades I* and *Phaedrus*.

explore how the readerly experience of specular gazing is similar to and different from Lucius’.

The Mirror: Ancient Interpretations and Apuleian Innovations:

The mirror has long provided writers a tool that is good to think with, from the earliest discussions of *mimesis* and poetry in ancient literary criticism³⁵ to 20th century theories in psychology, philosophy, and anthropology.³⁶ Archaeological studies have uncovered important features of ancient mirrors that may or may not have influenced Greek and Roman conceptions of the trope (largely because it is very difficult to recover how ancient viewers experienced the objects themselves).³⁷ And in the last 30 years, the cultural meanings of the mirror have become of great interest, as evidenced by Shadi Bartsch’s list of subject-specific monographs published on the mirror in this time period:

...the history of catoptrics, mirrors in literature, mirrors in the history of science, Etruscan mirrors, the psychology of the mirror, the gendered mirror, mirrors in religious mysticism, mirrors in ancient, Neoplatonic, and early Christian epistemological theory, and mirrors in the conceptions of the self.³⁸

³⁵ Three important literary critical moments that will recur throughout the dissertation are: (1) Pindar’s claim to offer a ‘mirror of poetry’ to reflect the deeds of an athletic victor (*Nem.* 7.12-7), (2) the claim attributed in Aristotle to the sophist Alcidas, namely that the *Odyssey* is ‘a beautiful mirror of human life’ (Alcidas *apud* Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.3: Ὀδύσσεια...καλὸν ἀνθρωπίνου βίου κάτοπτρον), and (3) Plato’s famous recourse to the mirror in his broader criticism of *mimesis* in *Republic* 10. On these seminal moments for aesthetic criticism, see Halliwell 2002.

³⁶ For the different approaches, see the following source works: Psychology, Lacan 1978; Semiotics, Eco 1986, Anthropology, Frontisi-Ducroux 1995; Philosophy, Rorty 1979. For an historical account, see Baltrusaitis 1978.

³⁷ For the archaeology of ancient mirrors, see de Grummond 1982; de Grummond 2002; Balensiefen 1990; and DePuma 2013. One of the reasons for the difficulty of recovering ancient viewing practices is the fact that it is hard to say what kinds of ancient mirrors certain authors would have seen. For my purposes, would Apuleius have only seen Roman silver or glass mirrors, or would he have had access to some Etruscan or Greek mirrors? De Grummond 2002 seems to suggest some general knowledge of Etruscan mirrors in 1st century Rome, as she uses the mythological scenes on them to interpret the famous Villa of the Mysteries. But it is difficult to say with what types of mirrors Apuleius, in particular, would have been acquainted.

³⁸ Bartsch 2010, 327. And her list is not exhaustive, as Bartsch herself admits. She is missing, for instance, Moritz Schuller’s 1998 dissertation on mirrors and self-knowledge.

So, with this proliferation of treatments of the mirror, one might ask, as Bartsch herself does upon listing the various monographs on the mirror,³⁹ where there is room for yet another dissertation on the *speculum*. But, unlike all of the previous treatments of the mirror in antiquity, this is not a dissertation about the mirror *per se*, but rather, about how the cultural, literary, and philosophical associations of the mirror are manipulated by one author. In fact, the procedure I am undertaking is rather the reverse of other studies. Whereas the scholarly treatments of the mirror to which Shadi Bartsch alludes take the mirror-as-cultural-symbol as their starting point, and then analyze how its symbolic power dictates, to a certain extent, how it gets used as a metaphor in different literary and visual texts, or how it represents broad-brush cultural ideologies, my project studies how one author used a rich cultural symbol to express philosophical, literary, and ideological issues in different genres. Thus, while these studies of the mirror can illuminate the symbolic valences and culturally embedded meanings of the mirror with which Apuleius may have been acquainted, most of them are only of oblique interest to the present study.

I except three seminal studies of the mirror, the main ideas of which it will be useful to restate here in order to establish the appropriate background to Apuleius' mirror(ing) scenes. I begin with Willard McCarty's 'The Shape of the Mirror: Metaphorical Catoptrics', as it represents the first systematic scholarly attempt to "describe a taxonomy of mirroring" and to define "the boundaries of the catoptric

³⁹ *Ibid.*: "One might be excused for wondering where in this specular profusion there might be room for another monograph on the ancient mirror..."

metaphor” in the canon of ancient literature up to Ovid.⁴⁰ He opens with a strict division of mirror metaphors into two overarching categories – ‘illusory’ and ‘visionary’ – though he maintains that many more instances of the metaphor fall in the ‘visionary’ category. He then subdivides ‘visionary’ mirroring into ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ catoptric encounters: in the former, he classifies ‘mystical’ and ‘moral’ mirroring, which amount to transcendent encounters with divinity and virtue-exhorting, exemplary mirrors, respectively; in the latter category, he labels encounters with the mirror as ‘labyrinthine entrapment’, ‘Eros’, ‘catoptro-erotic entrapment’, and ‘amuletic repulsion’. The former categories are generally associated with male mirror-users in antiquity, and the latter with female. And the capacity for entrapment – whether in a metaphorical labyrinth or in an unhealthy erotic situation – is dependent, I would posit, on the fundamentally magical associations of the mirror.⁴¹

Important for my study of Apuleius are two points McCarty makes in passing:

- (1) ...a mirror establishes a paradoxical relationship of correspondence and opposition between beholder and external things. On the one hand it involves him intimately in something not himself, on the other it separates his selfhood from himself and thus objectifies it.⁴²
- (2) Two properties of the physical device are significant to the metaphor...: its responsiveness, mirroring the observer, change for change, in time; and objectification, capturing his changeable image in space and thus seeming to give it an almost independent being.⁴³

⁴⁰ See McCarty 1989, 162 for the quotations. As McCarty explains, Ovid’s *Narcissus* is the τέλος of his study, though he does not himself deal with the scene in depth.

⁴¹ Cf. Eisler 1966, 99 (quoted in McCarty at p. 173): “die zauberische Anziehungskraft des Spiegelbildes auf die Seele eines Wesens”.

⁴² McCarty 1989, 165.

⁴³ McCarty 1989, 169. It should be noted that McCarty uses Apuleius’ *laus speculi* in the *Apologia* as one of the primary source texts for this point.

In regard to point (1), the boundaries of the self and their elasticity are of paramount importance for understanding the role of transformation – both within the novel and in the reader looking in from the outside – in the *Metamorphoses*. The reader is left asking how Lucius is involved or implicated in the events or actions he sees, whether he unwittingly becomes part of what he sees in the mirror, and what the reader’s role is in looking into the same mirror(s) as Lucius or looking at the world through Lucius’ eyes. This “paradoxical relationship of correspondence and opposition”, I will argue, is one of the interactive techniques of the novel, which involves the reader (perhaps against his or her will) in an experience of voyeurism. As to point (2), it is precisely the mirror’s ability to respond to and/or register change that makes it such a useful metaphor for metamorphosis, a point that segues nicely into Taylor’s helpful (if a bit overly systematic) taxonomy.

In his 2008 monograph on the *speculum* in Roman art, Rabun Taylor outlines five theoretical categories to define precisely ancient conceptions of the mirror: the *speculum* is (1) *magical*, (2) *metamorphic*, (3) *metaphorical*, (4) *magnetic*, and lastly (5) *moral*.⁴⁴ According to Taylor, all of these categories have positive and negative valences attached to them. The mirror is *magical* (1) in so far as it can both catch and trap souls or provide a portal to the dead and a prophetic vision of the future. On the other hand, it is *metamorphic* (2) in both bodily and spiritual senses; the mirror can serve as a catalyst for a bodily transformation, as in the case of Actaeon when he gazes into the reflective water in *Metamorphoses* 2.4, or it can represent a spiritual apotheosis. In both cases, it is a

⁴⁴ See Taylor 2008, 7-8.

threshold between two states of being. *Contra* Eco,⁴⁵ Taylor argues that, whatever its modern associations, the mirror in Greco-Roman folkloric conceptions was notionally semiotic because the reflection in a mirror could stand in for the subject and adopt all manner of metaphorical (3) and metonymic associations.⁴⁶ Apuleius certainly understood the *magnetic* and labyrinthine power (4) of the mirror: as we shall see in chapter 3, when I discuss Lucius' encomium of the hair-mirror in *Met.* 2.9, Lucius becomes obsessed with the 'reflection' offered by mirror-like hair to the point that he is entirely captivated and compelled to eulogize its power. Finally, the *moral* mirror (5) – the mirror as a teacher, which exhorts a viewer toward self-knowledge and virtuous behavior – is one of the categories that Apuleius himself adopts from philosophical conceptions of the mirror in *Apologia* 15 – a passage that we will encounter in chapter 1.

These categories of the *speculum*'s symbolic associations will be useful to keep in mind as we sift through Apuleius' various types of mirrors. It should be said, however, that Taylor's strict categories often get blurred when one undertakes a more rigorous study of particular passages in the literature. For instance, the mirroring water in Byrrhena's atrium (*Met.* 2.4) – a scene that will constitute the central study of chapter 2 – could be said to manifest all five of the categories almost interchangeably: the water shows Lucius-as-Actaeon (*metaphorical*), entraps him in obsession with magic (*magnetic*), transforms the scene from (among other things) a "Striding Diana" to a

⁴⁵ Eco 1986, borrowing from Stoic discussions of semiotics, notably elaborated on the 'semiotics' of the mirror, ultimately concluding that a mirror is not a 'sign' but rather a *prosthesis* that enhances our field of vision.

⁴⁶ See Taylor 2008, 8: "Anything that is an *agent* in a phenomenon may eventually become a *metaphor* of it, the sign vehicle of its own function. In essence the Roman mirror becomes, among other things, a signifier of metamorphosis – whether it be the banality of blossoming beauty, the pathos of loss, or the secret ways of achieving ecstasy in mystery cults".

“Bathing Diana” (*metamorphic*), brings a still-life statuary scene to life (*magical*), and exhorts Lucius to behave differently through a negative *exemplum*, or what Alexei Zadorojnyi has referred to as “ethical therapy by deterrence”.⁴⁷ Therefore, while I appreciate the heuristic value of a systematic taxonomy, I suspect (1) that some symbolic associations are not caught by this catch-all net – e.g., the male-female dichotomy in regard to mirror usage – and (2) that more than 2 or even 3 valences of the mirror could be at play in most of the scenes that Taylor wants to categorize strictly under one primary heading. I am not convinced that it would be useful for me to attempt to develop my own strict categorization of specular associations. Such an attempt would undoubtedly require a longer exposition and proof than I have room for here, and would inevitably fall prey to some of the same criticisms of boundary blurring and over-determinism that I have suggested here.

The final study I would like to single out – and the one to which I am most indebted – is Shadi Bartsch’s *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire*. Her approach essentially amounts to tracing the *Nachleben* of Greek and early Roman mirror scenes in later Roman literature with a view to offering a comparative history of sexuality in the two different ancient societies. Insofar as I am also tracing Greek ideas about the mirror in the literature of a 2nd century Latin author, one could easily pick out many affinities between Bartsch’s approach and my own. In particular, Bartsch’s readings of Roman mirror scenes – e.g., in Ovid and/or Seneca – as potentially ironic allusions to foundational Platonic mirroring scenes is in line with my own interpretive method; my focus on Apuleius is thus an extension and

⁴⁷ Zadorojnyi 2010, 172.

amplification of one of the premises Bartsch takes largely for granted – namely, the omnipresence of Plato as a cultural authority for philosophical and literary models.⁴⁸ However, I diverge from Bartsch’s approach in a number of ways: for instance, I am not particularly interested in seeing the mirror strictly as a metaphor for different models of sexuality (although, models of sexuality, too, will become important in chapter 3). Thus, while I am indebted to Bartsch’s overall argument, my readings of Apuleius are less about how the mirroring scenes can be seen as political and cultural matters of identity, and more concerned with how they represent interpretations of Plato. That is, rather than focusing on the cultural and social history of an object and analyzing how it can offer general insight into ancient cultures, I prefer to trace the philosophical history of an idea in Apuleius and to see how its reception can help us develop a better interpretive framework for Apuleius’ corpus.

Finally, it should be noted here at the outset that Apuleius’ obsession with the mirror has already received a certain amount of attention in the scholarship on specific scenes that I will treat in this study. As ownership of a mirror is one of the subsidiary charges laid against Apuleius – if we can take his defense in the *Apologia* to be a response to actual charges – he is referred to, at least in passing, in all of the aforementioned studies on the mirror, particularly as evidence for the *speculum*’s

⁴⁸ It should be noted that Bartsch depends perhaps too heavily on Plato as a cultural authority in Greece, insofar as she takes Platonic ideas about sexuality as representative of Greek ideas about sexuality without allowing for any ingenuity or deviance on the part of Plato from Greek normative ideas. Again, as I am not attempting to make broadly cultural statements about something so universal as sexuality in this study, but rather, studying one author’s appropriations of Platonic ideas – no less, an author who claims to be a *Platonicus philosophus* – my dependence on Plato as a cultural/literary authority is of a different order.

association with femininity and magic.⁴⁹ Most other treatments of the *speculum* in Apuleius briefly allude to his *laus speculi* from the *Apologia* to discuss the mirroring water in Byrrhena's atrium in *Met.* 2.4. Niall Slater, in applying Laura Mulvey's 'Gaze' theory from cinema studies to this *ekphrasis*, argues that the mirror offers a third point of view in the power dynamics of the Gaze between Diana and Actaeon in the atrium.⁵⁰ No doubt, one can see the power of vision and the viewer's control of the gaze as fundamental features of a novel about voyeurism. But instead of retrojecting modern theoretical models on an ancient text to make it seem cinematic, I am more interested seeing how issues of viewing and control can be viewed as aligned with Apuleius' Platonism and more generally, with Platonic concerns about mirror-gazing. Michael Paschalis also addresses the mirror in his interpretation of space in the novel – again, like

⁴⁹ For McCarty, Apuleius' defense proves the relative scarcity of mirror usage in antiquity: "The novelty of mirroring and the consequent intensity of its impact are suggested, for example, by the fact that Apuleius, in the middle of the second century A.D., felt the need to defend himself against the charge of possessing a mirror and to itemize in enthusiastic detail its virtues as a means of self-representation, hence self-knowledge...His defense is not gratuitous; literary and archaeological evidence confirms that until quite late mirrors were conventionally restricted in their use, chiefly to women for erotic or related purposes..." (McCarty 1989, 167). Bartsch 2006, 19 only uses *Apologia* 15 to deduce the fundamental philosophical associations of the mirror: "Apuleius' self-defense was merely a late manifestation of a distinguished tradition that united the ethicist and the mirror in the exhortation to virtue". And though Raybun Taylor devotes a solid 3 pages (Taylor 2008, 86-8) to interpreting the mirroring water in Byrrhena's atrium – very much in line with what other scholars have already done (on which, see below) – he also alludes to the *speculum* of the *Apologia* only in passing and only to show the masculine/feminine and philosophical/erotic divides between specular associations: "Among the evidence adduced against Apuleius in his celebrated trial for sorcery was the fact that he possessed a mirror. The orator defended his ownership of it by citing, among its other defensible uses, the philosophic function propounded by Socrates and its performative function as exemplified by Demosthenes...his was a true philosopher's mirror, he implied – a tool for self-improvement, but hardly complicit in effeminate self-admiration. No other passage in Roman literature so clearly establishes the carefully drawn divide between physiognomic (masculine) and cosmetic (feminine) uses of reflection" (Taylor 2008, 23).

⁵⁰ See, in particular, Slater 1998, 44: "The reflected image in the water flowing through the Diana-Actaeon sculpture reveals the possibility of the third point of view. Without this reflection the group resolves itself completely into a set of powerful binary oppositions: male voyeurs (Lucius and Actaeon) and female objects (the winged figures as well as Diana), inner scene (Diana and Actaeon) and outer scene (the female figures looking down on Lucius), but all pointing forward to a reversal of power in which the female gaze of Diana-Isis will dominate. The third viewpoint disrupts this strict economy, postulating an angle of observation outside the either/or of domination or subjection."

Slater, in a brief treatment of the issue. In particular, he mentions the mirror of the *Apologia* in applying Lessing's famous boundaries between the verbal and visual arts to Lucius' *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena's atrium.⁵¹ I do agree with Paschalis that Lessing offers an instructive model for interpreting this scene, as will become clear in my own treatment of this *ekphrasis* in chapter 2. But Paschalis, while espousing Lessing as a theoretical model, in fact, ends up saying little more than Winkler in his reading of the scene. That is, for Paschalis, this *ekphrasis* (and the novel in general) is all about the process of interpretation. Alluding to the title of Don Fowler's seminal 1991 essay on *ekphrasis* – 'Narrate and Describe' – Paschalis explains how the terms of this rhetorical practice have changed in Apuleius' time: "...the game in the Second Sophistic is called 'Description and Interpretation'."⁵² My reservation with such an interpretation lies in the fact that, while Paschalis claims to offer an aesthetic reading of Apuleius according to the model of Lessing, "the game" in Apuleius studies continues to be, as it so often has been, merely bolstering Winklerian hermeneutics.⁵³ I hope to use Lessing's framework in chapter 2 as a way of reading Apuleius and not as a veiled theoretical model to restate Winkler's faux-"open" reading.

Yun Lee Too is the only scholar to take Apuleius' *laus speculi* on its own terms,⁵⁴ claiming that his obsession with the *speculum* in *Apologia* 14 may represent an authorial response to the inscription of a statue dedicated to Apuleius by the Madaurans:

⁵¹ See esp. Paschalis 2002, 137, on which there will be more discussion in ch. 2.

⁵² Paschalis 2002, 134.

⁵³ A line from Paschalis 2002, 137 may be taken as representative: "It is the person who describes that steps in to *interpret* (his italics) and transform a visual text representing bodies in space into a verbal text representing actions in time."

⁵⁴ See Too 1996.

[APVLEIO..., PH]ILOSOPHO [PL]ATONICO, [MA]DAVRENSES CIVES
ORNAMENT[O] SVO D(ECRETO) D(ECVRIONVM) P(ECVNIA) [P(VBLICA)].⁵⁵

In response to the dedication of this statue, Too claims, Apuleius argues in his *Apologia* that the *speculum* is a better mimetic device because it allows the subject of the representation to retain control over the depiction. Thus, though she gives more space to the mirror in Apuleius *per se*, her analysis amounts to about the same claim that Slater makes in his ‘Passion and Petrification’, namely, that mirror-gazing can be reduced to a game of power. Rather than the power dynamics of viewing and voyeurism in Byrrhena’s atrium, Too’s concern is with control over representation, and in particular, how writing and mirrors, in Apuleius’ mind, achieve that better than the ‘plastic’ arts.

My analysis of the *speculum* in Apuleius is, no doubt, indebted to all of these treatments. The power dynamics of looking is always to a certain extent at play in specular scenes from antiquity, and Apuleius is no exception to this. Moreover, an author’s or artist’s control over their creation, or *mimesis*, is a concern of many ancient writers, one that can be found even in Plato. In fact, in chapter 2 of this dissertation, I will argue that the end of *Apologia* 14 – in which Apuleius prefers the *speculum* to other modes of representation on the grounds that the latter fix the viewer “in the manner of a corpse” (*ritu cadaveris*) – could be seen as an allusion to the conclusion of the *Phaedrus*, where λόγοι “stand still” and “signify only one and the same thing always” (275d7: ἐν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί; on which, more below). But to interpret all viewing in the novel in terms of power dynamics – though very much in line with the cynical reading of the *Metamorphoses* most popular amongst Apuleianists and with most post-Foucauldian

⁵⁵ On the dedication of this inscription, see Winkler 1985, 277 and Tatum 1979, 105-8.

scholarship of the 90's – is only one way of conceiving of Apuleius' relationship to the mirror and/or his characters' relationships to one another. As I suggested above, there is another way – a more serious way or, at the very least, a less cynical way – of looking at Apuleius' appropriation of this Platonic metaphor. Shortly, I will give a fuller explication of my argument that viewing and voyeurism in *Metamorphoses* can be interpreted as what I am labeling a “high-stakes choice” that Apuleius poses to the reader: that is, Apuleius gives us a choice between the cynical/pleasurable and the sublime/serious modes of viewing (and reading), and we are compelled to decide. But first it will be useful to clarify my approach in relation to Apuleius studies more generally.

Methodological Issues:

As I am analyzing how one particular trope is inherited from cultural, literary, and philosophical sources, I will depend on intertextual analysis throughout the dissertation. Latin literary studies saw an explosion of scholarly treatments of intertextuality and allusion in the late 80's and 90's, and “Apuleian studies” has developed its own particular brand of intertextuality, which takes reference and allusion to be phenomena that have an interpretive purpose unique to Apuleius. Some analyze intertextuality as a form of “parody”, such as Ellen Finkelpearl in her *Metamorphosis of Language in Apuleius*, one of the seminal pieces to use intertextuality for the study of this author: Finkelpearl reads reference and allusion in Apuleius as an attempt to negotiate a voice for the traditionally “low” genre of the novel.⁵⁶ Others, such as Stephen Harrison, one of the other pioneers of

⁵⁶ See Finkelpearl 1998.

intertextuality in Apuleius and in Latin studies more generally, employ terms such as “self-fashioning” to describe a phenomenon of creating insider readers through learned reference. As I discussed above, Harrison interprets all reference and allusion in Apuleius as attempts to display παιδεία and showmanship, as was characteristic of the Second Sophistic.⁵⁷ In fact, Harrison, in developing his unique approach to intertextuality, even coined a theoretical term – “generic enrichment” – to explain how the phenomenon that Finkelpearl identifies in Apuleius works in Latin literature writ large.⁵⁸

More recent interventions in Apuleius’ studies, such as those of Luca Graverini and Stefan Tilg, have given more nuanced readings of Apuleius’ relationship to the purple passages of Greek and (especially) Latin literature. Whereas Finkelpearl’s and Harrison’s understanding of Apuleius’ allusive technique tend to reduce it to parody – or in the case of Harrison, satiric self-fashioning – champions of the “serio-comic” interpretation of the *Metamorphoses* are willing to grant Apuleius more intellectual ingenuity by assuming that there is an interpretive point to his method of allusion beyond display and self-representation.⁵⁹

Of particular interest to me in this project is how references to Plato fit into the intertextuality-and-allusion picture, given that Platonism in Apuleius is usually treated as a separate issue. Just as real disciplinary boundaries separate classicists and philosophers in general,⁶⁰ so also is Apuleius’ Platonism often treated differently in different scholarly

⁵⁷ See Harrison 2000a; see also Harrison 2013, where he largely reiterates his theory of intertextuality in Apuleius.

⁵⁸ See Harrison 2007.

⁵⁹ See Graverini 2012; Tilg 2014.

⁶⁰ An excellent one-liner from John Henderson is illustrative: “Apuleius didn’t know how Classics departments would compartmentalize the interface between literature and philosophy” (Henderson 2001, 189).

circles. Scholars of Middle Platonism tend to use Apuleius' rather dry Platonic handbook, *de Platone et eius dogmate*, and his slightly more literary philosophical lecture, *de deo Socratis*, as source texts to be mined for information about this period of Platonism that is generally considered to be rather uninteresting.⁶¹ In Middle Platonic studies of Apuleius, therefore, literary allusions to Plato in Apuleius' rhetorical texts (i.e., the *Apologia* and the *Florida*) and his non-philosophical novel (i.e., the *Metamorphoses*) are treated much the same as the so-called non-philosophical passages of Plato, e.g., in the *Phaedrus* – that is, they are disregarded as unimportant.⁶² The question is one of doctrine and meaning, not of philosophical value or didaxis *through* literariness. On the other side of the disciplinary fence, classicists, I fear, are taking an equally dismissive stance when they suggest that Plato is only one of many authors to whom Apuleius alludes in order to sprinkle a little intellectual flavoring in for the tastes of his more learned readers. An allusion to Plato, as members of the Harrison school of reading would have it, merely serves to show off the παιδεία of the author and create a highbrow reference for smart readers to recognize. In this vein, Simon Swain describes Apuleius a bit tongue-in-cheek in his otherwise harsh review of Harrison's monograph:

[Apuleius] was a showman and a playboy, clever but shallow. He deserved to be condemned for seducing a rich widow, but had the temerity to ground his claim to innocence in the intellectual community between himself and the judge (the *Apology*). His egotism made him publish four books of highlights from his display speeches (the *Florida*). Intellectual vanity made him write a hack account of *Socrates and his Deity*. Finally his talents found a legitimate outlet in a comic novel about a man's life as an ass (the *Metamorphoses*).⁶³

⁶¹ See again n. 9 above.

⁶² Cf., e.g., Heath 1989 and Werner 2007 for this attitude towards Plato. Anecdotally, I was once asked by an ancient philosopher at a social gathering where I thought the *Phaedrus* began. Needless to say, I felt a little sheepish replying that I thought it began at the beginning. When he reiterated that, by his question, he meant something more like "where is Plato doing real philosophy?", I knew that I was at the wrong party.

⁶³ Swain 2001, 269.

Perhaps the one thing that philosophers of Middle Platonism and classicists can agree on is the fact that Apuleius is a “hack” philosopher.⁶⁴ But the enigmatic nature of Socrates has long been an authorizing force for other “playboy” philosophers who exhibit a similar strangeness and philosophical inconsistency.⁶⁵ Moreover, analytic philosophers who study Plato have long complained of his philosophical “inconsistency”, implying in essence that he, too, is a hack philosopher.⁶⁶ Maybe Apuleius is somewhat higher than Plato on the scale of being a hack. But an alternative interpretation of Apuleius’ doctrinal inconsistency – one that has been surprisingly absent from most treatments of Apuleius’ Platonism – is to say that Apuleius re-enacts a Platonic procedure in sprinkling his texts with hermeneutic ambiguity and problematic philosophical references.⁶⁷ A noteworthy exception to this is Richard Fletcher’s recent treatment of Apuleius’ Platonism; but even he uses the phrase ‘the impersonation of philosophy’ to describe what amounts to a claim similar to Finkelpearl’s negotiation of a voice. That is, Fletcher’s book is more about how

⁶⁴ Another line from Swain’s review further demonstrates this sentiment: “Dio Chrysostom is several times mentioned by H[arrison] in passing as a comparable ‘philosopher.’ He would turn in his grave” (Swain 2001, 269). Though, I might respond that Swain is perhaps overstating Chrysostom’s philosophical credentials.

⁶⁵ See, e.g., Newmark 2012, 15-16, where he claims a Socratic heritage for Friedrich Schlegel’s “playboy”-philosopher status.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., the work of Gregory Vlastos, which may be taken as representative the school of “analytic developmentalism”. This school, an offshoot of the Anglo-american analytic philosophical tradition, attempts to pick apart Plato’s inconsistencies and map them onto a chronological development of doctrines across the dialogues. A claim from Vlastos 1991, 45 will be illustrative: “I have been speaking of a ‘Socrates’ in Plato. There are two of them. In different segments of Plato’s corpus two philosophers bear that name. The individual remains the same. But in different sets of dialogues he pursues philosophies so different that they could not have been depicted as cohabiting the same brain throughout unless it had been the brain of a schizophrenic. They are so diverse in content and method that they contrast as sharply with one another as with any third philosophy you care to mention, beginning with Aristotle’s”.

⁶⁷ *Contra* “analytic developmentalism”, there is a continental-philosophical school of interpreting Plato in this way – one usually referred to as “literary contextualism” and associated with the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (see Gadamer 1980).

Apuleius conceived of himself as a Platonist rather than about how his procedure of allusion actually represents of a form of Platonism.

One of the most important contributions of this dissertation, a claim that I hope will be borne out through close philological scrutiny, is that these two modes of reference in Apuleius – Roman intertextuality and Platonic allusion – which are traditionally treated separately due to disciplinary divides, ought to be viewed as related parts of a whole system of reference. In the Roman intertextuality camp, scholars use phrases such as ‘Ovid serves as a bridge to Vergil’ or ‘Apuleius’ allusions to elegiac poetry are mediated through Ovid’ to describe Apuleius’ intertextual relationship to Roman literature. In response, I would simply ask: why is Ovid the only bridge and the Roman poetic tradition the only literary entity on the other side of the chasm being bridged? Considering that Apuleius is a self-proclaimed *Platonicus philosophus*, my suggestion throughout this dissertation is that Plato can very often be seen as a third – and in my view, the most important – interlocutor in the genre and allusion dialogue that Apuleius has constructed in the *Metamorphoses*; and moreover, that Plato himself littered his dialogues with allusions and references to Homeric and lyric poetry,⁶⁸ constructing his literary-philosophical texts in response to a literary tradition of which he was a beneficiary.⁶⁹ Apuleius, because he is a “Platonist” writing *in Latin*, is *situated* in the Roman literary tradition. Thus, Ovid, Vergil, and Lucretius, and indeed, the whole Latin

⁶⁸ Maximus of Tyre’s *Dissertations* 18 (to be discussed in more detail in ch. 4) demonstrates that this was a well-known way of reading allusion in Platonic dialogues in the Second Sophistic.

⁶⁹ A fact that Plato himself acknowledges, albeit begrudgingly, in *Republic* 10, when he describes the process of expelling Homer from the ideal state in terms of a bad break-up (*Rep.* 10.607e3ff.). In the opening of Socrates’ first speech in the *Phaedrus* as well, Socrates claims to have stolen the content of his speech, perhaps from a lyric poet – maybe Sappho or Anacreon – or from some “prose writer” (*Phaedr.* 235c3).

literary tradition, make up the pillars of a bridge that leads back to Plato. This is not to say that Apuleius is some kind of doctrinaire Platonist, hiding the secret truths of Plato in learned allusions to Vergil, or something along those lines. Rather, Apuleius’ “talents found a legitimate outlet” – to use Swain’s phrase – in reenacting Plato’s stylistic, dialogic, and narrative techniques of engaging and incorporating the reader. In that sense, Apuleius does something quite similar to Plato in creating a multi-vocal, multi-generic, and hermeneutically ambiguous or aporetic text in a “low” conversational genre that incorporates many other “high” genres into itself.

Platonism in the Metamorphoses:

Since R. Thibau’s treatment of Platonism in the *Metamorphoses*,⁷⁰ which is often considered to be an over-reading,⁷¹ the theme has received various kinds of treatments in the scholarship on the novel. Some, such as Carl Schlam, have merely noted Platonic allusions in the *Metamorphoses*, and extrapolated from them the idea that the novel unequivocally deals with Platonic themes at its core.⁷² In the wake of Winkler’s “open” reading of the novel, in turn, the intervention of Joseph DeFilippo provided a very welcome challenge to Winklerian ἀπορία by demonstrating a kind of studied use of a Plutarchan-inflected Platonism in the *Metamorphoses*.⁷³ That is, Plutarch’s

⁷⁰ Thibau 1965.

⁷¹ One may take as representative of Apuleian studies’ response to Thibau Stephen Harrison’s criticism of his Platonic reading of the Prologue: “I find the attempt to uncover philosophical significance [in the Prologue] by Thibau 1965, 92-101, vague and unconvincing” (Harrison 2000a, 255 n. 211).

⁷² See Schlam 1970. We may also categorize Hijmans 1987 in this camp. Dowden 1982 goes a bit further in noting structural similarities between the *Cupid & Psyche* inset tale and moments of ascent and descent in Platonic dialogues.

⁷³ See DeFilippo 1990. Winkle 2014, it could be argued, performs a similar kind of interpretive operation.

personification of Plato's tripartite soul – i.e., in the figure of Typhon in *de Iside et Osiride* – can be viewed as the appropriate intellectual background for Lucius' metamorphosis, the ass being the preferred animal of Seth, who is the enemy of Isis and the Egyptian version of Typhon. And since DeFilippo, many scholars have focused on broader Platonic themes, particularly in *Cupid & Psyche*, such as vision.⁷⁴ Maeve O'Brien attempted to bridge the gaps in these approaches in her 2002 monograph, *Apuleius' Debt to Plato in the Metamorphoses*, by harmonizing rather than challenging Winklerian narratology with a Platonic reading. From Apuleius' philosophical and rhetorical works, she developed a framework for discourse analysis – i.e., the Platonic theory of “lower” and “higher” discourses – which she then applied to the two parts of the *Metamorphoses* generally considered to be disjointed: books 1-10 are characterized by the “lower”, or “sophistic-rhetorical” kind of discourse, whereas book 11 aims at a “higher”, philosophical discourse, one in search of truth.

Since O'Brien, there have been a number of minor contributions to the discussion, which tend to follow one of these two already well-trodden paths. In the most recent edited volume from the Groningen group, Ulrike Egelhaaf-Gaiser, using a similar approach to DeFilippo's, interpreted Lucius' baldness at the conclusion of the novel as a polyvalent allusion to the bald spectacle of Socrates at the end of the *Symposium*.⁷⁵ Jeffrey Winkle, also in the DeFilippo camp, interprets the opening narrative passage of book 1 in light of Plutarchan Middle Platonism.⁷⁶ Ken Dowden's contribution to the structure of the inset tales, on the other hand, represents what strikes me as an entirely

⁷⁴ I am thinking here primarily of Dowden 1998 and Panayotakis 2001.

⁷⁵ See Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012.

⁷⁶ Winkle 2014.

new methodology, one that is perhaps the closest antecedent to my own general approach to Platonism.⁷⁷ In ‘A Tale of Two Texts: Apuleius’ *sermo Milesius* and Plato’s *Symposium*’, Dowden suggests, albeit implicitly, that Apuleius may have adopted the genre of the novel as a kind of dialogue form – a mode of indirect communication – taking his cue from the (possibly spurious) 7th letter of Plato, where Plato claims never to have written his thoughts about a matter down.⁷⁸ Dowden then continues to elucidate how the inset narratives in books 1-4 of the *Metamorphoses* can be viewed as *ego*-narrative speeches similar to the early speeches of the *Symposium*. In line with Dowden’s structural approach to the *Metamorphoses* is the narratological methodology in the concluding chapter of Richard Fletcher’s *Apuleius’ Platonism*. Fletcher, falling victim to the same criticism he lays against of the field of Apuleius studies,⁷⁹ analyzes what he labels the “impersonation of philosophy” in the whole oeuvre of Apuleius, with the *Metamorphoses* as the structural τέλος of his interpretive approach; and in his final chapter, “Narratology for Philosophy”, he reframes one of the major critical questions of the *Met.*’s Prologue – namely, who is the *quis ille?* (which, he translates a bit tendentiously as “who speaks?”) – to be merely “a rephrasing of basic issues of impersonation at the heart of philosophical writing and identity.”⁸⁰ That is to say, he later clarifies,

All Platonism must come to terms with Plato’s ‘creation’ of Socrates in the act of writing – his dressing up of philosophy with *oratio*.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Dowden 2006.

⁷⁸ See *Epist.* 7.341c-d. See Dowden 2006, 42-3 for discussion.

⁷⁹ See again n. 16 above.

⁸⁰ See Fletcher 2014, and particularly 267 for the quotation.

⁸¹ Fletcher 2014, 291.

I take these last two interventions in Apuleius studies as jumping-off points for my study of the *Metamorphoses*. For the purposes of the present study, my own variation on Fletcher's assertions amounts to the claim that scholars of Apuleius (and of Plato, for that matter) must come to terms with Platonism as a didactic mode of philosophizing rather than as a doctrinal system. I do not deny that Apuleius himself may have produced doctrinal, Middle Platonic treatises, though the debate about the authenticity of texts such as *de Mundo* and *de Platone et eius Dogmate* is still ongoing, with scholars leaning in the direction of authentic.⁸² However, *pace* Fletcher, rather than eschew a teleological reading of Apuleius' corpus – i.e., one that sees the *Metamorphoses* as the crowning achievement of a mature Platonist and the work that all of Apuleius' other works should be put in service of interpreting – I embrace the teleology. I do not consider the *Metamorphoses* to be the immature work of a rash, youthful Apuleius, who later found more legitimate outlets and genres for his philosophical pursuits; rather, I believe that there is a complex and Platonically inflected didacticism in the *Metamorphoses* in the way it traps, seduces, and corrupts the reader, and then subsequently, unmask, reveals, and criticizes his or her involvement in the text. This is precisely why the mirror is such a useful philosophical metaphor to understand the reader's engagement with Apuleius' novel: as we saw above, the mirror is erotic and labyrinthine – a tool of entrapment and

⁸² The most recent treatment of the authenticity debate is the introduction of Fowler 2016. And though Harrison 2000a makes a strong case for Apuleian authorship of *de Platone*, and Fletcher 2014 almost takes it as given, Swain 2001 registers his legitimate concerns. See Swain 2001, 270 (on the authenticity of *de Platone* and *de Mundo*): "The obstacle is the work of Axelson on the use of accentual rhythms in these two works, which suggests a date too late for A[puleius]. This is honestly confronted by H[arrison] at pp. 178-80, who argues that A[puleius] dumbed-down in these scientific works and felt no need to keep to Ciceronian rhythms. In one way the works are more interesting if they are not by A[puleius] (as seems on balance to be the case), though H[arrison] puts up a stout defence, since they then represent (along with the *Peri Hermeneias*, also attributed to A[puleius]) evidence of Middle Platonism in Latin".

seduction; but it is also a tool that enables the viewer to engage in self-criticism, to see beneath the external self to the inner man, and to “look at a man naked, to see what sort of a man he is” (Seneca *Epist.* 76.32: *qualis sit, nudum inspice*).

As the critical lens for this study, I am adopting a simple version of reader-response criticism from a seminal article by Stanley Fish.⁸³ In this piece, the basic interpretive question is not “what does the text mean?” or “what is it saying?”; rather, the questions are: “what does the text do?” and, “to whom?” The text is not a fixed object; the written words are not the λόγοι of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, which “stand as if living” (ἔστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα) but “signify only one same idea always” (ἓν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί) when someone asks a question of them.⁸⁴ But then again, neither is a Platonic dialogue, which is Plato’s preferred form, as he explains in the *Seventh Letter*, because real learning happens through conversation and constant question and answer. The question “what does the text do?” thus has a diachronic dimension, as the individual words, sentences, and chapters unfold over time. In reading dialogue such as the *Phaedrus*, the reader is compelled to adopt positions only to have the firm ground turn into quicksand, with the didaxis happening through the diachronic process of recalibration in the reader.⁸⁵ So, too, the hermeneutic games that Jack Winkler so deftly uncovered in his magisterial *Auctor et Actor* happen to the reader *over time*. Thus, while the games for Winkler are about the process of reading and how pleasurable it can be to watch bad interpreters fumble their way through a series of events that require good

⁸³ See Fish 1980, though *Surprised by Sin* and *Self-Consuming Artifacts* could also be considered useful interpretive models in the same vein.

⁸⁴ See *Phaedrus* 275d4ff. (to be discussed at length in ch. 2).

⁸⁵ I am adopting here an interpretation of the *Phaedrus* offered in Fish’s *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (Fish 1972).

exegesis, I would posit that the interpretive games are not really games at all, but ways of incorporating readers into the world of the novel; that is, of making them sympathize with Lucius through shared voyeurism and scopophilia and then forcing them into the position of critics at the end of the novel. The narrator tricks us into expecting a pleasurable reading experience with the promise of mere *divertissement*, and then suddenly changes the terms of the text with the unforeseen reinterpretation of Isis' priest, Mithras, in book 11. But Plato does much the same, e.g., in the *Symposium*, when he makes the reader into an audience member for a series of increasingly drunken encomia to ἔρως that wander (perhaps unexpectedly) into the territory of sublime transcendence, only to be rudely interrupted by another drunken rambler.

In the case of Apuleius, my rather simple answer to Fish's grandiose question about experiential reading is what I suggested in the opening of this introduction, namely that Apuleius forces the reader to make a high-stakes choice at the outset about what kind of book s/he would like to read and what kind of experience s/he would like to have. Winkler's analogy to the detective novel full of hermeneutic "conundrums" is, I suggest, not only anachronistic – being based on a genre entirely unknown to antiquity – but also not *à propos*. A detective novel that answers the question "whodunnit?" at the end only to lead the reader to a state of pure ἀπορία upon a second reading would appear very strange indeed. In other words, Winkler's answer to "whodunnit?" seems to amount to "whoever you like", and I know of very few detective stories that end in that kind of hermeneutic ambiguity.⁸⁶ Choice narratives, on the other hand, have many interpretive advantages for

⁸⁶ Perhaps *Murder on the Orient Express* is the only exception, but even there, the answer to the question is not really *up to the reader*.

us. Not only are they a regular *topos* of the literature of antiquity, but they also make exegetical allowances for different readers and different reading experiences. By this second claim, I mean that the ἀπορία that choice narratives create is not the meaningless hermeneutic ambiguity of the 1980's, in which every interpretation of a text is about challenging the act of interpretation; rather, it is a Platonic kind of ἀπορία – or, a confusion over which road to take.

Choices between the pleasurable and the philosophical can be traced all the way back to Homer and Hesiod, with Odysseus' choice to listen to the Sirens' song and Hesiod's 'two-roads' in the *Works and Days* providing the *loci classici* in antiquity. Hesiod's passage, in particular, has a rich *Nachleben*, as Richard Hunter has recently shown,⁸⁷ especially if we consider its relationship to Prodicus' famous *Choice of Heracles* found in Xenophon.⁸⁸ In regard to the *Nachleben* of choice in the *Odyssey*, we may consider Socrates' reference to the Siren-esque cicadas in the *Phaedrus* to be itself a reworking of Odysseus' choice; there, Socrates encourages Phaedrus to pick philosophical wakefulness over pleasurable listening.⁸⁹ Moreover, Plato's discussion about the teachability of students in the *Seventh Letter* – if it is indeed authentic – makes learning seem like a matter both of the character of the student and of a choice to undergo the rigors (πόνος) of philosophy.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ See Hunter 2014a, 92-100.

⁸⁸ See Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21-34. Cf. Hunter 2014a, 270: "As for the Hesiodic paths themselves, it is perhaps not without significance that, in Xenophon's report of Prodicus' 'Choice of Heracles' (*Memorabilia* 2.1.21-34), a sophistic *epideixis* which is clearly an elaboration of Hesiod's image, as Xenophon indeed suggests by citing the Hesiodic verses immediately before Socrates' report of Prodicus' work, the lady called Virtue... is described as... 'fair to look upon and free in nature' (2.1.22)".

⁸⁹ See *Phaedr.* 258e7ff.

⁹⁰ It may be worth pointing out that πόνος is precisely what the lady Αρετή promises to Heracles at the opening of her speech at Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.28.

In Apuleius' milieu, choice narratives, both serious and ironic, become an even more regularly invoked *topos*. For instance, Hesiod's "two roads" passage acquires a new life of sorts – e.g., in the works of Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, and Proclus⁹¹ – to such an extent that Hunter even suggests Hesiod's "long and steep and at first rough" path to virtue may have been considered by Middle- and Neoplatonists the antecedent to Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*.⁹² Of particular interest to me, though, is how Plutarch, in his *Quomodo Quis suos in Virtute Profectus Sentiat*, connects Hesiod's "road to virtue" ultimately to a choice over how to read. At 79c ff., the narrator speaks of reading as an activity for "improving one's character" (79c8ff.: πρὸς ἐπανάρθωσιν ἡθους). Citing Simonides, he explains that, just as a bee makes honey from flowers while the rest of the world merely enjoys their color or fragrance, some men find and collect a sentiment "worthy of seriousness" (τι σπουδῆς ἄξιον) amidst literature that others read only "for the sake of pleasure or diversion" (ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα καὶ παιδιᾶς). This dichotomy between 'serious' and 'pleasurable' is precisely what is at stake in Apuleius' text, and many scholars have come up with different solutions to the ways in which Apuleius plays with the classic *utilitas/dulcedo* question about the value of literature.⁹³ My contribution to the debate is to suggest that it is not one or the other, based on arbitrarily selected pieces of evidence, but that Apuleius' text offers the reader a choice between the two.

Beyond the serious allusions to Hesiod's "two roads", there is a parodic strand of choice narratives in the works of some of Apuleius' contemporaries – one that even turns

⁹¹ See, e.g., Plutarch *Quomodo Quis suos in Virtute Profectus Sentiat* 77d-e; *How to Study Poetry* 36e; Proclus' Scholium, Hesiod, *Works and Days* 290-92; Dio Chrysostom *Orationes* 1, for a political reworking of Hesiod's 'two roads.'

⁹² See Hunter 2014a, 93-6.

⁹³ See Graverini 2012 for the most sensitive reading.

erotic at some points. Lucian's *Somnium*, for instance, ironically dramatizes the choice between παιδεία and sculpture as life paths, alluding to another kind of "choice of Heracles". But he reverses the terms of the choice, with παιδεία appearing beautifully seductive in the manner of vice and with sculpture showing off her calloused hands. In an erotic strand of choice narratives, pseudo-Lucian's *Amores* humorously dramatizes the choice between boy-loving and girl-loving in a bifurcated viewing experience of Praxiteles' famous statue of the Knidian Aphrodite: the girl-loving Charicles looks at the statue from the front and responds by showering her with kisses; the boy-loving Callicratidas does not see anything particularly seductive about the notoriously erotic representation until he views her from behind and chooses to imagine her as a young boy. A similar kind of choice between boy-loving and girl-loving occurs in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe & Clitophon*, when Clitophon debates with Menelaus about the virtues of loving women over men (*Leucippe & Clitophon*: 2.35-8). Similarly to pseudo-Lucian's *Amores*, this scene ironically adopts the choice narrative motif, to which many Second Sophistic writers allude, but here we encounter the possible philosophical or Platonic terms of such a choice. For Menelaus, in explaining why boy-loving is better, resorts to the famous dichotomy between "heavenly" and "vulgar" forms of erotic love, which was first popularized in Pausanias' speech in Plato's *Symposium*. Moreover, if we combine the dichotomy of οὐράνιος and πάνδημος ἔρως with the aetiology of erotic love that Aristophanes gives in the *Symposium* – namely, that humans cut from the stock of an all-male original are the best and boldest⁹⁴ – we get the terms for a correspondence between boy-loving as philosophizing and girl-loving as a more appetitive pursuit. Now, I am not

⁹⁴ *Symp.* 192a1-3.

suggesting that these erotic choice narratives are strictly serious. Rather, I propose that they are ironic appropriations of Plato, which also may have an element of σπουδαῖον mixed in with the γελοῖον.

That Apuleius himself conceived of philosophy as a choice is clear, especially if we take Richard Fletcher's point about the "conversion" of Plato in the biography of *de Platone* being framed in terms of a choice to pursue philosophical rather than pleasurable literary pursuits.⁹⁵ The dichotomy between "heavenly" and "vulgar" love, moreover, has already been recognized as one of the guiding principles of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. As E. J. Kenney has observed, the *Cupid & Psyche* inset narrative dramatizes the conversion from the pursuit of πάνδημος ἔρωσ to a reoriented desire for οὐράνιος ἔρωσ⁹⁶; and some scholars even interpret Isis in book 11 as a "heavenly" corrective to the "vulgar" love of the early books.⁹⁷ In chapter 3, I will suggest that Apuleius may be engaging with the pseudo-Lucianic choice narrative,⁹⁸ as his depiction of Photis wavers between the boy-loving and girl-loving approaches to viewing the Knidian Aphrodite figure. But rather than endorsing the strictly Platonic reading of the *Metamorphoses* as a rewriting of Pausanias' speech, I suggest that the choices between types of ἔρωσ and modes of viewing are made available to the reader.

⁹⁵ See pp. 7-8 above.

⁹⁶ Kenney 1990b.

⁹⁷ Krabbe 2003.

⁹⁸ The question of the authenticity and dating of the *Amores* is still open. But some recent critics have even suggested that the text is Lucianic (see, e.g., Elsner 2007b). For more discussion, see ch. 3 (p. 202-3 with n. 429).

The Choice Embedded in the Prologue of the Metamorphoses:

By way of introduction to my high-stakes choice model, I would like to focus on the opening line of the Prologue and analyze how one vision word – *inspicere* – encourages the reader to choose to take a deeper look into a text that foregrounds *divertissement*. The Prologue opens:

At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram auresque tuas benivolas lepidus susurro permulceam, modo si papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam non spreveris inspicere, figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se rursum mutuo nexu refectas, ut mireris. exordior. quis ille?

But I will weave variegated tales for you in that Milesian style and I will charm your benevolent ears with pleasurable whispering, provided that you do not disdain to look into an Egyptian papyrus inscribed with the cleverness of a Nilotic reed, in order that you may marvel at figures and fortunes of men transformed into other images and turned back into themselves by a mutual knot. I begin my prologue. Who is that?

The promise of charm for the ears and of marvelous visions seems to emphasize at the outset that this novel aims only to be a pleasurable distraction. Add to this the fact that the Prologue famously concludes with the phrase: *lector intende; laetaberis* (“reader, pay attention; you will be delighted”).⁹⁹ Indeed, Michael Trapp says of the Prologue:

Whatever other functions it may perform, the Prologue to Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* strikes a thoroughly hedonistic note, from its fifth word, *Milesio* (‘Milesian’) to its last, *laetaberis* (‘you will revel in this’).¹⁰⁰

And Luca Graverini connects the “pleasurable whispering” (*lepidus susurrus*) and the “charming of the ears” (*aures permulcere*) to the bucolic *topos* of a *locus amoenus* and

⁹⁹ Freudenburg 2007, 245 has even suggested (albeit implicitly) a word play here: if one flips the words *lector* and *intende*, one gets *inten-de-lector*, which Freudenburg then connects to Lucius, who describes himself as “taking pleasure” – *delector* – in Byrrhena’s atrium. I will return to this point in ch. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Trapp 2001, 39.

the age-old literary critical debate about the “utility” and “pleasure” associated with literature. Apuleus’ Prologue, he concludes,

...offers us a ‘sweet’ and psychagogic kind of literature, apparently unconcerned with anything *utile*, and able to entice its reader with an almost magical and possibly dangerous power...¹⁰¹

In fact, Graverini even connects the *susurrus* of the Prologue to the cicada song of *Phaedrus* 258e, which, I suggested above, represents a reworking of an *Odyssean* choice narrative. But unlike Socrates and Phaedrus, who choose philosophical dialogue over the pleasurable Siren song of the cicadas, Apuleius’ narrator appears to promote a decidedly *inutile* kind of poetics; or to phrase it differently, he seems, at least *prima facie*, only to offer one road to his reader, the pleasurable.

However, if we look more closely at *inspicere* and its context, this whole assessment of the text begins to appear rather one-sided. It is indeed true that the horizon of expectation the Prologue establishes is reading for *divertissement*. But this type of looking that the text requests in a seemingly modest proviso clause is, in fact, a philosophical type of inspection unlike the strictly erotic and dangerously enchanting viewing we shall see Lucius enjoying throughout the novel. Maaike Zimmerman rightly elucidates the strangeness of this word when she notes:

Remarkably, when the reader is asked not to decline to examine this papyrus, the verb *inspicere* is used...In his *Apology*...Apuleius uses *inspicere* frequently, always with the connotation of scholarly enquiry, close scrutiny, and philosophical curiosity. For even when Apuleius talks about *inspicere in speculum* (‘looking into a mirror’), he presents looking into a mirror as an eminently philosophical occupation. As actual readers we too are invited to carry

¹⁰¹ Graverini 2012, 25.

on our careful examination of the text of the *Metamorphoses*, reflecting on what we see reflected there.¹⁰²

When we, furthermore, consider what it is that we are asked to “look into” – “an Egyptian papyrus inscribed with the wit of a Nilotic reed” – we can see a further invitation to something more “serious”. Many commentators have noticed an allusion to the end of Plato’s *Phaedrus* in the collocation of Egypt – the home of writing –, the self-conscious emphasis on the written-ness of this text, and the Nilotic *calamus*, an instrument that also appears in the same Platonic scene.¹⁰³ However, if we are being asked to ‘look into’ a *Phaedran* kind of text – with λόγοι that are “sown” (σπείρειν)¹⁰⁴ only “for the sake of pleasure” (παιδιή) –, then why does the narrator request a more philosophical type of looking?

To address this question, it will be illustrative to consider three famous moments from Latin literature in which this philosophical type of “looking” (*inspicere*) is employed (two of them involve mirrors) and with which Apuleius would have been well acquainted.¹⁰⁵ The earliest is a passage from Terence’s *Adelphoi*, in which the stern father

¹⁰² Zimmerman 2001, 255.

¹⁰³ See Trapp 2001, who was the first person to draw out the allusion clearly. Though it should be said that for Trapp, “the Plato of the *Phaedrus* is here invoked not as an ally but as an adversary” (Trapp 2001, 41). Kirichenko 2008 falls into this same camp for the most part. I cannot say that I entirely agree with Trapp’s claim, as it seems to oversimplify the original Platonic moment into a kind of doctrinal statement against writing. In response, I would suggest that this moment of the *Phaedrus* is the final rug being pulled out from under the reader, as the experience of the whole preceding written dialogue was both pleasurable and didactic for the reader.

¹⁰⁴ On *conserere* as a translation of Plato’s σπείρειν, see Thibau 1965 and Dowden 2006. Separately, I am in the process of publishing a paper on the polysemy of the first two verbs – *permulcere* and *conserere* – both of which have dual meanings alluding to “pleasurable” and “serious” literature.

¹⁰⁵ Hunter 2014b demonstrates that a passage from *de deo Socratis* alludes to the Horace’s passage. May 2006 convincingly shows that Apuleius had a thorough knowledge of comedy in general and of Terence’s *Adelphoi* in particular. While it is difficult to say for certain whether Apuleius had knowledge of Senecan texts, I propose that one could make a case that he did know *de Clementia* if one compares its preface to the introductory passage of book 2 of *de Platone* (2.1.1-5): *Moralis philosophiae caput est, Faustine fili, ut scias quibus ad beatam vitam perveniri rationibus possit. Verum ut beatitudinem bonorum fine ante alia contingere putes, ostendam quae de hoc Plato senserit.*

figure, Demea, exhorts his son to “look into” the mirror of other men’s lives to see exemplary behavior (*Adelphoi* 415-7):

denique
inspicere tamquam in speculum in vitas omnium
iubeo, atque ex aliis sumere exemplum sibi.

Finally, I bid him to look into the lives of all men as if into a mirror and to take an example for himself from others.

From this, Demea explains, one can learn what one should do (*hoc facito*), what one should flee (*fugito*), what is praiseworthy (*laudi*), and what is considered vice (*hoc vitio datur*). This method of catoptric inspection of others’ lives becomes, in turn, an authorizing force for exemplarity in Roman historiography and biography, wherein the text *becomes* the life, fusing together with it to provide a prosthetic mirror to the reader.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, this *speculum* represents a version of what Rabun Taylor calls *triangulative* mirroring, according to which a viewer measures himself against a third party in respect to virtues and vices rather than contemplating his or her own faults in the *reflexive* mirror.¹⁰⁷ We shall return to this passage in chapter 1, where I will trace a tradition I label the ‘Socratic didactic *speculum*’. But, it is worth noting at this point that the kind of viewing Demea demands here – *inspicere* – is a catoptric self-contemplation aimed toward the cultivation of virtue – that is, to a serious purpose.

In between this exemplary self-inspection and another well-known text-*speculum* – Seneca’s famous mirror for princes – lies a passage from Horace’s ‘other *Ars Poetica*,’

¹⁰⁶ On this passage in connection with Roman exemplarity, see Mayer 1991, 145. On the mirror as a didactic prosthesis, see Eco 1986.

¹⁰⁷ See Taylor 2008, 20-1 (to be discussed in ch. 1).

Epistles 1.2¹⁰⁸; in it, Horace recounts how he has spent his *otium* re-reading Homer because “he tells us what is beautiful, what is foul, what is helpful and what is not” (*Epist.* 1.2.3: *qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non...*). In a treatment of exemplarity similar to Terence’s *triangulative* mirror of men’s lives, Homer is framed as a moral teacher with a certain *utilitas*. The *Odyssey*, in turn, is held up to be a teaching text in a tradition of allegorizing interpretation that can be traced back to a famous fragment from Alcidamas, where he describes the *Odyssey* as “a beautiful mirror of human life” (see n. 34 above: Ὀδύσσεια...καλὸν ἀνθρωπίνου βίου κάτοπτρον).¹⁰⁹ When Horace comes to the figure of Odysseus, he explains (lines 17-20):

Rursus, quid virtus et quid sapientia possit,
utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulixen,
qui domitor Troiae multorum providus urbes
et mores hominum inspexit...

Again, as to what power virtue and wisdom possess, Homer has set before us a useful model in Ulysses, the conqueror of Troy, who looked with prudence upon the cities and customs of many men...

In the context of reading, therefore, Homer places before (*proponere*) the reader’s eyes a “useful exemplary figure” (*utile exemplar*), who “providently looked into” (*providus...inspexit*) cities and customs. In passing, we should note here that Horace may also be working in the same tradition of exemplarity that Cicero alludes to in the *Pro Archia* (*Pro Arch.* 14, to be discussed more fully in ch. 1), which is itself engaged with

¹⁰⁸ For the phrase, see the title of Hunter 2014b.

¹⁰⁹ Though I know of no one who has suggested an intertextual connection between Horace’s passage and Alcidamas’ fragment yet, Hunter 2014b, 33-5 connects these lines from Horace to a passage from Apuleius’ *de deo Socratis*, which refers to Homer – and more specifically, Odysseus the character – as a mirror of discernment (*DDS* 177-8). In chapter 1, I argue that Apuleius’ use of Homer as a didactic mirror in this passage certainly alludes to the tradition of Alcidamas’ *Odyssey*-mirror. Thus, whether or not Horace is actually alluding to Alcidamas, we can say that Apuleius put the passages together in his later moralizing interpretation of Odysseus as a didactic model.

Terence's mirror of imitation and deterrence. There, Cicero expounds upon the beautiful *imagines* left behind by Greek and Roman authors, which he holds in front of his face (*proponere*) to guide him in his administration of the republic.¹¹⁰ In Horace's encomium of Homer from the *Epistles*, too, Odysseus becomes an *imago* (here, *exemplar*) that interacts with the reader in the same dialogic, *triangulative* mirror-text that we will encounter many times. Essential to my point here is how "loaded" this term *inspicere* is as a translation of Homer's *ἰδεῖν* (*Od.* 1.3), especially when we compare it to Horace's other translation of the same word at *Ars Poetica* 142 (*vidit*).¹¹¹ This makes good sense in *Epistles* 1.2, where Homer is framed as the fountainhead of philosophical learning and as a teacher greater than Chrysippus and Crantor: in order to make Odysseus into a philosophical journeyman, Horace must, in a sense, enhance the verb of 'seeing.' Homer's *utilitas* as a textual mirror for life becomes, in turn, inextricably connected to the display of the philosophical *exemplar* he puts before our eyes.¹¹² But in Apuleius' *Odyssey*-esque *Metamorphoses*, in which Lucius (among other characters) is obsessed with seeing, the "scrupulous reader" (*lector scrupulosus*) *outside* of the text is asked by the Prologue-narrator to employ a more philosophical type of viewing than the characters

¹¹⁰ quam multas nobis imagines non solum ad intuendum verum etiam ad imitandum fortissimorum virorum expressas scriptores et Graeci et Latini reliquerunt! quas ego mihi semper in administranda re publica proponens animum et mentem meam ipsa cogitatione hominum excellentium conformabam ("How many *imagines* of the strongest men carved for our benefit did the Greek and Latin writers leave behind-for us not only to gaze upon them but also to imitate them! Which, placing them before myself always as I administer the affairs of the Republic, I molded my soul and mind by the very cogitation of excellent men").

¹¹¹ See Hunter 2014b, 34 n. 2 and Moles 1985, 35, both of whom bring up the philosophical implications of *inspicere* and *providus*.

¹¹² Hunter 2014b, in explicating the tradition of moralizing allegorization of Homer, connects this passage to Apuleius' description of the exemplary character of Odysseus in the *de deo Socratis*. Just as here Odysseus "providently looks into" the cities and customs of men, in the Apuleius passage, Homer "teaches us with the character of Odysseus" (177-8) about how to keep *prudencia* and *sapientia* as companions through the journey. Indeed, this passage in the *DDS* appears just after Apuleius invokes the trope from Alcidas that the "*Odyssey* is a beautiful mirror for life".

within the text. While Horace's Odysseus "looks into" (*inspicere*) cities and customs and by doing so, shows readers an exemplary model of philosophical investigation, the reader of the *Metamorphoses* sees Lucius employing a non-philosophical or pleasurable kind of viewing (*adspicere*) and is asked to do his or her own philosophical discernment.¹¹³

The final instance of *inspicere* that will be instructive for our interpretation of Apuleius' Prologue comes from one of Seneca's most well-known passages, the preface to his *de Clementia*, in which he claims to hold up a *speculum* into which Nero can gaze. The treatise opens:

Scribere de clementia, Nero Caesar, institui, ut quodam modo speculi vice fungeret et te tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium.

I decided to write about clemency, Nero Caesar, in order that I might function in some way like a mirror and reveal you to yourself, (showing) that you will come to the greatest pleasure of all (people/pleasures).

Much has been written about this passage and the way in which it represents a brilliant approach for an inferior adopting a didactic position vis-à-vis an emperor¹¹⁴; and much could be said about the strangeness of this particular formulation, with the mirror-text substituted for the narrator's voice. For the purposes of this introduction, it is not necessary to get into details, and I will thus postpone extensive discussion of it until chapter 1. But an important feature to note here is the line that follows this famous

¹¹³ On the differences between these types of viewing – between *inspicere* and *adspicere* – see the introduction of ch. 4, where I offer a more detailed analysis.

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., Braund 2009, 154 *ad loc.*: "The image of the mirror is a commonplace which goes back to at least Plato...But Seneca's use of it in this context is ingenious. It allows him to avoid the inherent difficulty of giving advice to an emperor - a difficulty recognized by Plutarch in *Ad Principem Ineruditum* at *Mor.* 779e and one which was always likely to be a problem for Seneca, as the teacher of Nero...- by appearing to praise Nero through simply acting as his mirror." For an excellent general discussion of this passage, see also Ker 2009.

opening, where the narrator expounds upon the benefits of looking into this text-
speculum:

iuvat **inspicere** et circumire bonam conscientiam... immittere oculos in hanc
immensam multitudinem discordem... loqui secum

...It is pleasing to look into and inspect a good conscience, to cast one's eyes on
the discordant multitude...and to dialogue with oneself...

The text-*speculum* for Nero is framed simultaneously as a tool (1) to see deep within the
conscience – though it is unclear whether it is his own *conscientia* or the people's –, (2)
to look upon the *multitudo* (i.e., to know people outside himself), and (3) to speak as if in
dialogue with himself (*loqui secum*). That is, the text somehow gives Nero the kind of
catoptric encounter we will see Plato advocate in the *Alcibiades I* – knowing oneself
through dialectic with an other – but it does so through objectifying the self into the
interlocutor and paradoxically revealing a comprehensive knowledge of both self and
other. But it only works if Nero “looks into” it, with the *inspicere*-type of viewing once
again representing a deeply philosophical (albeit pleasurable) procedure.

We shall return to the opening of the *Met.*'s Prologue in chapter 4 in order to flesh
out more fully how the whole sentence alludes obliquely to the text-mirror tradition and
sets up an embedded choice for reading the rest of the novel. With a more thorough
philological study of all the verbs from the *-spicere* family that appear in Apuleius (i.e.,
despicere, *aspicere*, *inspicere*), I suggest that *inspicere* represents the most philosophical
and Platonic type of viewing, that is, the kind of transcendent theoretic viewing that
happens in sublime moments of ascent in the dialogues.¹¹⁵ One may compare *inspicere*, in
particular, to the mode of superficial viewing we shall see Lucius engage in throughout

¹¹⁵ On Platonic viewing in general, see the excellent monograph of Nightingale 2004.

the novel, “gazing upon” (*adspicere*) the superficial and surface level features of reality and conceiving erotic and narrative desire. That is Lucius’ psychological state at the opening of book two, where he indulges his curious desire to look at (*aspicere*) everything; and that is how Lucius-*auctor* encourages us readers to look at the mirroring water in Byrrhena’s atrium (*pronus aspexeris*) in order to see the narrative of a bathing goddess played out before our eyes. But at the outset of the novel, in a passage that seems to foreground its own charm and *dulcedo*, the narrator asks us to take a deeper look at λόγοι, which may be sown playfully like the seeds of knowledge in the *Phaedrus*. While these speeches have their own Siren-cicada charm, they nevertheless demand an acute and “wakeful” reader to pierce through the pleasurable words. By putting such a philosophically inflected word in a passage about *divertissement*, Apuleius gives us a choice between the “pleasurable” and “serious” modes of reading.

Chapter Structure:

In chapter 1, I open with a reading of *Apology* 15-16, the section where Apuleius appeals to philosophical models to legitimize his mirror usage. Here I argue that Apuleius’ defense of the philosophical benefits of mirror-gazing represents a choice for the reader between two distinct intellectual traditions on the mirror: (1) a Platonic catoptric tradition, which likens the process of dialectic to seeing oneself in the mirroring soul of another and acquiring self-knowledge, and (2) a separate, pseudo-philosophical tradition, which encourages mirror-gazing as an incitement to virtuous behavior and which curiously (and most likely, spuriously) claims Socrates as its founder. The former,

Platonic tradition is primarily introspective insofar as it encourages the viewer/user to look beneath the surface features of a person (or of oneself) and to find the soul beneath; the latter, Socratic didactic *speculum*, which teaches both ugly and beautiful people to act virtuously in order to compensate for or live up to their external appearance, represents what I label the *extraspective* mirror – a tool for the cultivation of external virtue, which has material and social advantages. In presenting the two traditions as if they are interchangeable, Apuleius offers the reader/audience a choice between ways of cultivating and displaying the self, and portrays his opponent, Aemilianus, as someone who has failed to gaze into the mirror and thus failed to choose the philosophical life.

Chapter 2 turns to the much-discussed *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena's atrium, which I analyze in relation to aesthetic ideas developed in Apuleius' *Apology*. That is, Apuleius' defense speech introduces well-known Platonic questions about the problems associated with representation and the affective influence it has over a viewer/listener. The mirroring water of Byrrhena's atrium, in turn, brings these representational problems to life in narrative form, posing an inherently Platonic choice to readers as to how they will engage with this text. For this chapter, I will depend on a version of Lessing's famous division between the 'plastic arts' and poetry in his *Laokoon*: the 'plastic' arts can only represent "bodies in space", whereas poetry (and words in general) are able to depict "actions in time". The *laus speculi* of *Apologia* 14 clearly positions the *speculum* in the liminal space between the boundaries of these two separate arts, being a visual tool that can both represent "bodies in space" and "actions in time". Taking this framework, I turn to Byrrhena's atrium, where I demonstrate that Lucius' (and the reader's) position over the mirroring water not only alludes to Ovid's Narcissus and Actaeon scenes, but

simultaneously engages with important Platonic questions about *mimesis* and the narrative and erotic desire it inspires in the viewer/listener. Apuleius' Actaeon, being both a combination of different Ovidian mirror-gazers and a thematic double of Lucius at the end, is simultaneously a Platonic joke on Lucius and a warning to the reader about indulging in the same fantasy. Though Lucius fails to make the right choice in response to his pleasurable gazing in the mirror, the reader is nonetheless encouraged to question his or her own attachment to the voyeuristic pleasure that this novel offers in its presentation of illicit or otherwise inaccessible sights. As the reader looks into the mirroring water together with Lucius, the text presents a choice, particularly to the retrospective reader, about how he or she wants to read this novel: as a co-voyeur with Lucius or as a critic and philosophical initiate.

The third chapter explores a similar engagement with Plato, in which a Platonic scene of idealized, erotic mirroring is reinterpreted through a Roman poetic and Second Sophistic tradition of reading Plato. In *Metamorphoses* 2.9, at the opening of his tryst with Photis, Lucius looks at her from behind as she seductively dances, and he eulogizes her hair for its catoptric quality. This scene of erotic visualization of the beloved, I suggest, alludes (albeit ironically) to a very famous scene of transcendent mirroring from Plato's *Phaedrus*. There, at the apex of the myth of the soul, the beloved looks into the eyes of the lover, and "does not realize that he is seeing himself as if in a mirror". At this moment, the issues at the heart of the *Phaedrus* – self-knowledge, the hybrid nature of the soul, the *psychagogic* power of rhetoric – are resolved at least temporarily in a moment of inter-subjective reflection. Plato's account of the sublime heights of erotic mirroring had a rich afterlife in antiquity, inspiring many alternative accounts of

mirroring erotic desire, and Ovid's Narcissus and Seneca's Hostius Quadra episodes represent only two of many moments in literary history that allude to Plato's ideal. Apuleius' hair-mirror takes the allusion to this well-known Platonic reference point one step further by turning the beloved around. That is to say, the interaction Lucius has with the transcendent mirror is mediated not through the eyes – the Platonic windows to the soul – but through the hair. In my view, though, the refracted allusion to Plato is not an empty hermeneutic game, where we watch a bad interpreter of Plato fumble around while we take pleasure in the spectacle. Rather, the complication of the Platonic model invites us to make a choice between models of love – the idealized Platonic *Eros* or the Roman ironized interpretation of it. That is, Lucius' hermeneutic dilemma leaves us poised between utilitarian and aesthetic modes of appreciating beauty, and through the dilemma, we readers are given a chance to reassess our own erotic desires and to reconsider how we approach love.

This engagement with Plato could also be seen as a different kind of choice narrative, especially when we consider a possible intertextual relationship with pseudo-Lucian's *Amores*. As I mentioned above, in that text, there is a choice between boy-loving and girl-loving. The crux of the narrative happens when two viewers of opposite sexual preferences walk around Praxiteles' statue of Knidian Aphrodite and respond differently to different parts of the goddess' body: the boy-lover is excited by Aphrodites' boyish backside, and the girl-lover takes his pleasure from her front. The hair-mirror in *Met.* 2.9 – which I label the *Haarspiegel* for the sake of convenience – is almost immediately succeeded by a rather obvious reference to the Knidian Aphrodite pose: in *Met.* 2.17, Photis strips off her clothes, lets her hair down, and “is transformed into the

guise of Venus who comes up from the waves of the sea, even covering over her smooth-shaven pubes for a short time, intentionally shadowing it rather than hiding it out of modesty” (*in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum feminal rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia*). But before the *Haarspiegel*, in sections 2.7-8, Lucius lustfully gazes upon Photis’ backside, and imagines himself to be the ideal Platonic, homoerotic viewer. Thus, just as in pseudo-Lucian’s *Amores*, the choice for Lucius is between two types of erotic love and two types of viewing. Viewing the Knidian Photis through Lucius’ eyes, the reader is invited to participate in and simultaneously question Lucius’ own delusional Platonic theorizing.

In the fourth and final chapter, I will return to the opening of the Prologue and demonstrate how it establishes what I call an “embedded choice” particularly for the retrospective reader. One of the ways it does this is through a subtle allusion to the conclusion of Plato’s *Symposium*, where Alcibiades eulogizes Socrates in two “images”: Socrates is like (1) a Silenic statue, which, when one opens it up, reveals “statues of gods”, and (2) Marsyas the Satyr, who competed with Apollo in charming his listeners. I will suggest, moreover, that already in Plato’s eulogy of Socrates, the readers (and listeners at the symposium) are invited to an embedded choice between models of erotic desire, that is, between the sublime and transcendent ἔρως of Diotima, and the love of the “serio-comic” spectacle of Socrates. Thus, Apuleius’ allusion to this moment at the beginning (and for that matter, the end) of the *Metamorphoses* similarly invites readers to contemplate the options, and to feel a similar confusion over which interpretive road to take.

CHAPTER 1: The Didactic Mirror of the *Apologia*

In the whirlwind rhetorical conclusion of Apuleius' defense speech (*Apol.* 103), Apuleius sets himself the task of summarizing and responding to each of the subsidiary charges in a series of laconic phrases. After having delivered a marathon defense speech that would rival any congressional filibuster, he reduces the charges to “shiny teeth” (*spendidas dentes*), “looking into mirrors” (*specula inspicias*), “making verses” (*versus facis*), “exploring fish” (*pisces exploras*), “consecrating wood” (*lignum consecras*), and “taking a wife” (*uxorem ducis*).¹¹⁶ To each of these subsidiary charges, he offers a two-word answer; and to the charge that he looks into mirrors, Apuleius responds: *debet philosophus*. Though the accusation clearly hinges on the mirror's association with effeminate behavior in men and is intended to portray the accused as a magic-performing dandy,¹¹⁷ Apuleius rhetorically manipulates the situation by explaining that mirror speculation constitutes a *sine qua non* of philosophical activity — one authorized by previous exemplars. But how can Apuleius conclude that a philosopher “should” look into a mirror? Or perhaps we should ask, why is mirror-gazing one of the necessary activities that defines the philosophical life?

¹¹⁶ On the powerful rhetorical display of this two-word summarization of and response to the charges, see Hunink 1997, 248 *ad loc.* 103.2: “the defense reaches its climax with a series of triumphant exclamations...Apuleius clearly takes pride in his ability to need only two words for every charge or response. This piece of verbal skill, which reads like an oratorical exercise or an impressive improvisation, illustrates yet again his great proficiency as a speaker and a verbal artist. Furthermore, it is in accordance with the practical rule given by Cic. *Orat.* 226...”

¹¹⁷ See the discussion that opens *Apologia* 13-16 in Hunink 1997, 58: “Apart from magic and luxury, there is also a strong link with erotic purposes: mirrors were a common attribute of Venus and their use was conventionally restricted to women for erotic or related purposes...Use by men was often condemned, since it implied effeminacy...”

The *Apologia* constitutes the clearest starting point for my investigation into what I am calling “high-stakes choice” narratives not only because the genre of philosophical apologies was inaugurated by Plato’s *Apology* for Socrates — a text that attempts to make Athenian readers retroactively rethink a choice they had already made — but also because the requirements of the genre already establish a choice for the audience. That is to say, Apuleius puts the reader or listener in the position of the judge, transforming the external audience into another Claudius Maximus, the judge of the trial whom Apuleius flatteringly presents as a true philosopher. Readers/listeners are given a choice, in turn, between the prosecution’s version of the story and Apuleius’, and between two models of life, the philosophical and the non-philosophical.¹¹⁸ As we shall see, nowhere in this rhetorical masterpiece is this choice more apparent than in Apuleius’ encomium of the mirror, where he represents mirror usage as an eminently philosophical activity. Indeed, towards the end of the *laus speculi*, when the speaker transitions from a eulogy of the mirror to an invective against Aemilianus, the prosecutor, Apuleius even translates phrases and tropes from Plato’s *Apology* in an effort to align the listener’s high-stakes choice with a notorious choice where the audience had taken the wrong path.

In what follows, I argue that the second half of the *laus speculi*, which appeals to moral and natural philosophy as authorizing forces for legitimate mirror usage, conflates two alternative intellectual traditions of specular viewing: a Platonic tradition derived

¹¹⁸ Of this “performative gesture”, Fletcher 2014, 177 says: “In both *Apologia* and *Florida*, Apuleius’ role as philosopher-speaker is confirmed by his separation from the activities of his prosecutors in the former and affiliation with his audience in the latter. By adopting this manner of defense in his speech, Apuleius states that he is ‘justifying philosophy before the ignorant and proving myself’ (*purgandae apud imperitos philosophiae et probandi mei*, *Apol.* 1.3). Besides, the flip side of this is that by expressing his own situation as a philosopher on trial, Apuleius can build the best possible defense of philosophy from his own situation”.

from texts such as *Alcibiades I*, *Phaedrus*, and *Apology*,¹¹⁹ and another catoptric tradition that utilizes the metamorphic associations of the *speculum* to frame the acquisition of virtue in terms of external adornment. One fascinating feature of this process of reception is the fact that this latter strand of philosophical catoptrics, though distinctly anti-Platonic in its conceptualization of virtue, claims Socrates as its ancestor.¹²⁰ That is, there is a spurious story, popularized in the Imperial Era and the Second Sophistic, that Socrates advocated catoptric speculation to his disciples: a beautiful person should gaze into a mirror in order to cultivate virtuous behaviors that correspond to his or her external appearance, whereas an ugly person ought to recognize his or her own grotesque aspect in the mirror and learn to compensate for it with beautiful customs. If the former Platonic tradition represents an introspective procedure – one akin to the deeper “looking” (*inspicere*) discussed in the introduction – the Socratic didactic *speculum* is concerned rather with external appearances and behavioral transformation, for which reason I am coining a new umbrella term for it, the *extraspective* mirror. By combining the two ethical-philosophical traditions in his *laus speculi*, Apuleius offers two choices to his readers/listeners: (1) should one follow Apuleius, a well-educated philosopher-rhetorician, in looking into a *speculum*, or should one avoid specular reflection, as Apuleius’ grotesque and mean accuser, Aemilianus, did?, and (2) if one chooses to follow Apuleius, then what kind of viewing should one utilize in mirror-gazing – introspective

¹¹⁹ See Zadorojnyi 2010 for a good treatment of the relationship between Plutarch’s teaching-mirror and Plato’s. See Bartsch 2006 on the influence of the Platonic self-knowledge tradition on later treatments of the mirror. Cf. also McCarty 1989, 168: “Exemplary mirroring as a whole is based on this Socratic notion that individuation is a process of self-discovery”.

¹²⁰ For those that cite Socrates as the progenitor to this tradition – either naming him explicitly or indirectly alluding to the γνῶθι σεαυτὸν tradition, of which Plato’s Socrates was a notorious proponent – see Seneca *Nat. Quaest.* 1.17.4, Plutarch *Mor.* 141dff., Apuleius *Apol.* 15, Diogenes Laertius *Vit. Phil.* 2.33, and *Phaedrus* 3.8 (all to be discussed below, save *Phaedrus*).

viewing aimed at self-knowledge, which strips away external features such as physical beauty and social circumstance, or *extraspective* speculation, which advocates an ethical, behavioral metamorphosis for political or social benefits?

Fundamentally at stake in this choice, as is the case in many scenes of catoptrics in antiquity, is how one chooses to define the self.¹²¹ In the *Alcibiades I* – a text which acquired the status of an introductory textbook for a student first learning Plato in antiquity¹²² – Socrates defines the self radically as the soul and advocates the introspective approach to mirroring.¹²³ As this dialogue represents an attempt at philosophical education through the mirror, moreover, Alcibiades' recognition of his own soul in the mirroring eyes of another offers him an opportunity to choose a different life path from the pursuit of social and political success. In his appropriation of the teaching-mirror in *Apologia* 15-16, Apuleius employs the same Platonic terms and concepts (e.g., self-knowledge and the Delphic maxim, transcendent encounters through mirroring phenomena, philosophical marvel and its pedagogical effect), but leaves open the possibility for drastically different definitions of the self, of philosophical growth and transcendence, and of the goal of education. Whereas progress in the Platonic philosophic journey is portrayed as a process of recognizing a fixed, immortal soul, which is merely temporarily stuck in the mutability of material reality, Apuleius' alternative conception of

¹²¹ See again Bartsch 2006 for a full explication of the *speculum*'s relationship to conceptions of the self in antiquity.

¹²² On the *Alcibiades I* in antiquity, see Denyer 2001, 14; Pradeau 1999; the introduction to Segonds' text of Proclus' commentary on the *Alcibiades* (Segonds 1985). For more references, see Bartsch 2006, 41ff. We know that Apuleius read the *Alcibiades I* and considered it authentic, as he quotes it in the *Apologia* (*Apol.* 25.11), on which, see pp. 79-80 below.

¹²³ See *Alcibiades I* 131c1-3, discussed below. This radical definition of the self-as-soul is part of the reason why commentators, such as Vlastos, have been so bothered with Platonic ideas of erotic love. See Vlastos 1981 on the radical nature of the Platonic model of erotics. On the *Alcibiades I* as one of Plato's most "extreme" dialogues, see Scott 2000, 82.

philosophical self-reflection is a metamorphic one, in which one's internal character transforms to match and/or compensate for one's external characteristics.¹²⁴ Learning is, moreover, about one's inside as well as one's outside; the metamorphosis of character, or the internal transformation one experiences through the teaching mirror, is thus borrowed as a metaphor from the external transformation a woman undergoes vis-à-vis the mirror for erotic adornment.¹²⁵ But rather than doing one's hair when one looks in the mirror, one "does" one's soul, as it were. In other words, "adorning the inner man" with virtue is merely an alternative version of using cosmetics, which stands in stark contrast to Platonic catoptrics.

As suggested above, Apuleius is not the first to use the "teaching-mirror" of Socrates in this way, and shortly, we will scan through the tradition of the *paideutic speculum*/κάτοπτρον in order to see how the entire trope, developed roughly in the time of Apuleius, hinges on a kind of misreading of Plato or on a spurious biographical tradition. This teaching mirror can take many forms – the mirror-of-the-text, the author/narrator as mirror, the *speculum* of biography or of "lives" (*vitae/βίαι*), the mirror of pantomime and dance, the κάτοπτρον of history – and the slippage between these categories of the didactic mirror tends to render the trope itself rather ill-defined. For

¹²⁴ One may consider as a partial proof of this the end of Apuleius' biography of Plato in the *de Platone* (*de Plat.* 1.2). As Fletcher 2014 suggests but does not fully develop, there is a pivotal moment in the middle of Plato's biography – namely, his encounter with Socrates – which Apuleius frames as a conversion to philosophy. The boy whose natural talent is displayed on his beautiful "external face" gives up the frivolous life of writing poetry and converts to the life of philosophical reflection. Thus, the education at the feet of Socrates leads to self-reflection, which, in turn, brings about internal transformation to match external beauty.

¹²⁵ See McCarty 1989, 168: "...a woman's use of a mirror implied the creation and maintenance not merely of her status in the world but of the *mundus muliebris* itself, created in this life and the next by an act of adornment in which mirroring played an intimate role. The nature of this role becomes clearer when we note that although use of mirrors by men was usually condemned, the adornment of the inward man often adopted the metaphor if not the philosophical use of an actual mirror".

instance, in a text of Plutarch that recounts a life, the narrator claims to offer a mirror to readers, with both the text and life conflated into the same teaching mirror trope and with both providing the reader a way of seeing him- or herself.¹²⁶ However, this seems to blur the lines between reading a text and looking at a person¹²⁷: the person, or his/her *vita*, *becomes* the text, which oddly a reader can look into in order to adorn his or her self. What is truly strange about this encounter, though, is the fact that the text-life-spectacle-mirror (for lack of a single term) does not show the reader his or her self as it essentially is – that is, it does not, like the Platonic mirror from which it is derived, reveal an inner, eternal soul that is merely obscured by perception and external reality. Rather, when the text is invoked as a teaching mirror, it offers to readers a behavioral model or *exemplum* for them to follow.¹²⁸ It reveals a putative self, a self that could exist if the reader or viewer takes the text-mirror into hand and responds appropriately.¹²⁹ This externally-

¹²⁶ See, e.g., the opening lines of Plutarch's *Life of Timoleon* (discussed below).

¹²⁷ See, e.g., Duff 1999, 32-4 for a helpful analysis of this slippage in Plutarch. On the brilliant but muddled confusion between narrator, text, and mirror in Seneca's opening to *de Clementia* – a passage which spawned the famous “mirror for princes” trope – see Ker 2009; Braund 2009.

¹²⁸ Taylor 2008, 20-1 is right to divide this cosmetic mirror into two separate forms, the *reflexive* and the *triangulative* (his italics). He explains that in the *reflexive* mirror, “...the subject would see himself, along with...his faults and virtues, and adjust his life accordingly,” whereas, in the *triangulative*, “...he might be instructed by the virtues and faults of others, reflected in some metaphorical mirror such as a literary or theatrical account of their deeds”. But, contrary to his point, the triangulation that occurs in Terence's *speculum* of other men's lives, for instance, is utterly different from Plato's ‘*triangulative*’ mirroring between people and the divine. At a fundamental level, Terence's mirror is about metamorphosis towards an exemplary ideal, whereas Plato's triangulation relates to the recognition of an already existing self, hidden behind the layers of external reality. The cosmetic mirror, therefore, differs from the Platonic mirror in as much as the former is behavioral and the latter is self-reflective. Plato's mirror may just as easily be categorized as *reflexive* in a different sense from Taylor's, because it shows a viewer one's self as one already is through triangulation.

¹²⁹ Zadorojnyi 2010, 172 : “In a culture preoccupied with exemplarity the mirror delivers not merely a likeness but rather a template of the self....Appositely, Plato is given credit for an analogous practice of moral mirroring”. Zadorojnyi then proceeds to cite four instances where Plutarch tells the (likely apocryphal) story that Plato would ask, ‘am I too like that?,’ whenever he saw someone misbehave (see *de aud.* 40d; *de cap. ex inim.* 88e; *de tuen. san.* 129d; *de coh. ira* 463e). Related to this didactic mirror trope, too, is another motif, which was popular in the Second Sophistic, of ‘serious’ and ‘pleasurable’ reading practices, as in Plutarch's *How to Recognize that One is Making Progress in Virtue* (see p. 16-8 below for discussion). In a way, mirror-gazing and reading could be linked by this ‘serious’ vs. ‘pleasurable’

oriented text-narrator-life-spectacle-mirror is what I refer to with my new umbrella term, the *extraspective* mirror.

1. Literary History of the Didactic Mirror:

In order to situate Apuleius in the tradition of the teaching mirror trope, it will be helpful to see its derivation from earlier usages as well as its proliferation as an image in the Imperial period and the Second Sophistic. Already before Plato, the mirror is endowed with strange metaphoric powers and starts to signify accurate representation of reality or even a hyperbolic representation. In Pindar's *Nemean* 7, for instance, the poet serves as a mirror for the athlete, offering a poetic telling of his deeds that actually outstrips the reality of the events and immortalizes the athlete.¹³⁰ Wine is a mirror for a person in Aeschylus,¹³¹ and the flow of time reflects reality like a *κάτοπτρον* in Euripides.¹³² Even the text-mirror or the mirror of literature can be found before or possibly in the time of Plato: the pupil of the sophist Gorgias, Alcidamas, is said to have

dichotomy that ultimately has its roots in literary critical categories of *utile* and *dulce* – a theme to which we will return in chapter 4.

¹³⁰ See *Nem.* 7.12-7: εἰ δὲ τύχη τις ἔρδων, μελίφρον' αἰτίαν/ ῥοαῖσι Μοισᾶν ἐνέβαλε: ταῖ μεγάλοι γὰρ ἀλκαῖ/ σκότον πολλὸν ὕμνων ἔχοντι δεόμεναι:/ ἔργοις δὲ καλοῖς **ἔσοπτρον** ἴσαμεν ἐνὶ σὺν τρόπῳ,/ εἰ Μναμοσύνας ἑκατὶ λιπαράμπυκος/ εὖρηται ἄποινα μόχθων κλυταῖς ἐπέων ἀοιδαῖς. On the aesthetic enhancement the mirror gives to reality in this passage, see Frontisi-Ducroux and Vernant 1997, 117-18; Halliwell 2002, 133 n. 42. Taylor 2008 is wrong to categorize this as the earliest example of *triangulative* viewing in the mirror (see p. 209 n. 13), in as much as the purpose of Pindar's mirror is not exactly to hold up an exemplary model for viewers. Pindar's version of mimetic realism is meant to immortalize the victor rather than to create clones of him. On the immortalizing function of the mirror in *Nem.* 7 and Epinician more generally as a way of coping with temporality, see Segal 1967; Grethlein 2010.

¹³¹ Aesch. fr. 393 Radt: **κάτοπτρον** εἶδους χαλκός ἐστ', οἶνος δὲ νοῦ...

¹³² Eur. *Hipp.* 428-30: κακοὺς δὲ θνητῶν ἐξέφευγ' ὅταν τύχη,/ προθεῖς **κάτοπτρον** ὥστε παρθένῳ νέᾳ,/ χρόνος;

called the “*Odyssey* a beautiful mirror of human life”,¹³³ though we know little more about this citation than the fact that it was said.¹³⁴ As Timothy Duff points out in regard to Plutarch’s appropriation of the mirror trope in programmatic statements, the metaphor of the *speculum*/κάτοπτρον encompasses “anything which reveals the true nature of a man”.¹³⁵ But as one moves forward in time, one sees the mirror trope itself transformed into a moralizing literary device. Whereas these pre-Platonic instances of the trope seem to be concerned with representation and revelation of selfhood, as we see, e.g., in the notion that wine reveals the true person hidden beneath social niceties,¹³⁶ in the later adaptation of the didactic mirror, we will encounter the notion that the goal of mirror speculation is to change the self hidden underneath, or even stranger, to learn how to hide better the vices that the mirror reveals.¹³⁷ The *speculum* itself metamorphoses from revealer of hidden selfhood to a normative enforcer of an exemplary self, and this transformation primarily takes place, as we might expect, in the Imperial period and the

¹³³ See Alcidas *apud* Aristotle *Rhet.* 3.3: Ὀδύσσεια...καλὸν ἀνθρώπινου βίου κάτοπτρον, where, interestingly, Aristotle is speaking about successful and unsuccessful metaphors. This line of Alcidas is classed, according to Aristotle, as an example of frigidity of metaphor.

¹³⁴ This claim likely predates Plato’s famous mirror of *mimesis* in *Republic* 10 (Halliwell 2002, 171-2). For the “ethical value” implied in this line, see Richardson 1981, 7. For the notion that this represents an impressive literary-critical judgment, see O’Sullivan 1992, 72. Solmsen 1968, 2 n. 139 goes so far as to suggest that Alcidas’ claim spurred Plato to use the mirror metaphor in his critique of *mimesis*. Though the connection between this line and Plato’s mirror is interesting, I am inclined to agree with Stephen Halliwell that the excerpt is too brief to attribute any of these readings to it, especially considering its function as an example of failed metaphor in Aristotle (see Halliwell 2002, 133 n. 42).

¹³⁵ See Duff 1999, 32 n. 56.

¹³⁶ Cf. the later aphorism – *in vino veritas* – attributed to Socrates.

¹³⁷ This latter version of the mirror of self-knowledge – i.e., knowledge that enables one to obscure vices and nasty character traits – is one of the options we will find in Apuleius, when he cites what I am calling the ‘Socratic’ teaching mirror (*Apol.* 15); Diogenes Laertius, too, describes Socrates’ exhortation to mirror-gazing for the cultivation of virtue in terms of hiding vice rather than cultivating virtue. See Diog. Laert. *Lives* 2.33, quoted below (n. 148).

Second Sophistic, the age that has been aptly referred to as a “panopticon of spectatorship”.¹³⁸

One strand of the didactic mirror is attributed to Socrates himself – what I will hereafter call the ‘Socratic’ teaching or didactic mirror – who is said to have exhorted his followers to look into a mirror. According to this spurious anecdote, he allegedly encouraged both the beautiful and the ugly to mirror-gaze, the beautiful in order that they might recognize their beauty in it and desire not to ruin it with bad character,¹³⁹ and the ugly in order that they may see their grotesqueness and long to compensate for it with beautiful virtue. While this anecdote seems to epitomize Shadi Bartsch’s definition of self-knowledge as “directed toward moderation and control of the social behavior of the individual”,¹⁴⁰ one would have difficulty arguing, I imagine, that Plato’s Socrates understood self-knowledge in this way or that he would have endorsed such a socially conditioned function for mirror-gazing.¹⁴¹ The first extant allusion to this ‘Socratic’

¹³⁸ See Elsner 2000, 105-6.

¹³⁹ Clearly, this does not work, and as evidenced by episodes like Narcissus and Hostius Quadra, the Romans could conceive of things going terribly wrong when beautiful youths looked into mirrors.

¹⁴⁰ See Bartsch 2006, 25 for the larger quotation: “Although the idea of ‘self-knowledge’ suggests, for us, a romantic introspection into the hidden depths of the soul, or a Freudian uncovering of the unconscious desires of the id, the ancient notion of *sōphrosyne* was directed toward moderation and control of the social behavior of the individual, toward the approbation of his peers rather than the flowering of an inner potential. This provides the crucial link between *sōphrosyne* as a set of practices and the notion of self-knowledge in antiquity, and also explains why, for us, the employment of the mirror as a tool to those ends might seem empty or superficial, while for our Greco-Roman writers it provides a significant view onto the self”. I would not dispute Bartsch’s claim that this is a general cultural view of *σωφροσύνη* in antiquity, but I would argue that the “romantic introspection into the hidden depths of the soul” is certainly gestured to in Plato, as Bartsch herself comes close to acknowledging in her discussion of the *Alcibiades I* (see p. 42). In other words, Plato was not concerned primarily with certain social behaviors, but did very much suggest that self-knowledge was a process of reaching beyond to a metaphysical soul.

¹⁴¹ *Contra* Schuller 1998, who suggests through analysis of Alcibiades’ speech in the *Symposium* that social relations was precisely the kind of self-knowledge Plato endorsed. However, Alcibiades’ speech, I would argue, provides the wrong evidence for what Plato was after in inserting the mirror into the self-knowledge/*σωφροσύνη* tradition. In chapter 4, I will argue that Apuleius recognizes precisely the interplay between the socially motivated self-knowledge in Alcibiades’ speech and the more transcendent knowledge

tradition – although, it should be noted, it does not specifically mention Socrates – comes from Seneca’s *Naturales Quaestiones*. In the middle of his digression on Hostius Quadra and his depraved use of distorting mirrors during sex, Seneca obliquely refers to this alleged anecdote about Socrates (*Nat. Quaest.* 1.17.4):

Inuenta sunt specula, ut homo ipse se nosset...formosus, ut uitaret infamiam; deformis, ut sciret redimendum esse uirtutibus quicquid corpori deesset...

Mirrors were created so that man might know himself...the handsome man, to avoid infamy, the ugly man, to know that whatever is lacking to his body must be compensated for by means of virtue.

This passage is often assumed to be alluding to the famous mirror of self-knowledge in *Alcibiades I*¹⁴²; there, as we will see shortly, Socrates argues that the self *is* the soul and that the best way for the soul to see itself – and thereby, to fulfill the Delphic maxim – is for it to look into the best part of another soul, which will, in turn, serve as a mirror. This bewildering scene treats the soul as divine and the intersubjective encounter primarily as a narcissistic means of seeing one’s self and having a transcendent encounter at the same time.¹⁴³ But already in Seneca’s analysis of this scene, we see the socially-motivated mirror-speculation rear its ugly (or beautiful) head. It is not Platonic self-knowledge in any transcendent sense that Seneca is striving after here, but rather a social contract in which beauty is not besmeared by a bad reputation and ugliness is compensated for by means of inner goodness. Plutarch is the first we know of to explicitly cite Socrates as the fount of this tradition, claiming that Socrates bid those of the “mirror-gazing youths”

of the metaphysical soul in the *Phaedrus*, and prefers the self-fashioning and socially entrenched model over the Platonic model in his creation of the character of Lucius.

¹⁴² See Taylor 2008, 19.

¹⁴³ See Wohl 2013 for a good treatment of this passage and its relationship to the socially motivated erotic desire one finds in Xenophon’s Socratic dialogues.

(τῶν ἐσοπτριζομένων νεανίσκων) who were ugly to “correct their form with virtue” (ἐπανορθοῦσθαι τῇ ἀρετῇ...τὸ εἶδος) and exhorted the beautiful among them “not to dishonor their form with vice” (μὴ κατασχύνειν τῇ κακίᾳ τὸ εἶδος).¹⁴⁴ This citation of the ‘Socratic’ teaching mirror occurs ironically in a treatise where Plutarch advises wives – those who would use actual mirrors for cosmetic adornment – to look into the philosophical mirror as well and employ it to gauge their inner virtue. We even see Plutarch here lifting phrases wholesale from the Platonic self-knowledge tradition and appropriating them to a more *extraspective* end: the phrase εἶδος ἐπανορθοῦσθαι, for instance, is actually borrowed directly from the scene in Plato’s *Phaedrus* where Socrates refuses to rationalize a myth because he does not yet know himself.¹⁴⁵ That is to say, Plutarch takes a line from a passage where Plato introduces concerns about the structure of the metaphysical soul and self-knowledge – arguably, the most important concerns of that dialogue¹⁴⁶ – and applies it somewhat haphazardly to mirror-gazing in the context of female behavior.¹⁴⁷ Later in the Imperial period and the Second Sophistic, we hear of other versions of Socrates’ exhortation to youthful mirror-gazing, for instance, in

¹⁴⁴ See Plut. *Conj. Praec.* 25 (*Mor.* 141dff.).

¹⁴⁵ See *Phaedr.* 229d2ff.: ἐγὼ δέ, ὦ Φαῖδρε, ἄλλως μὲν τὰ τοιαῦτα χαρίεντα ἡγοῦμαι, λίαν δὲ δεινοῦ καὶ ἐπιπόνου καὶ οὐ πάνυ εὐτυχοῦς ἀνδρός, κατ’ ἄλλο μὲν οὐδέν, ὅτι δ’ αὐτῷ ἀνάγκη μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ τῶν Ἱπποκενταύρων εἶδος ἐπανορθοῦσθαι, καὶ αὖθις τὸ τῆς Χιμαίρας, καὶ ἐπιρρεῖ δὲ ὄχλος τοιούτων Γοργόνων καὶ Πηγάσων καὶ ἄλλων ἀμηγάνων πλήθι τε καὶ ἀτοπίαι τερατολόγων τινῶν φύσεων.

¹⁴⁶ See Griswold 1986; Ferrari 1987; Morgan 2012.

¹⁴⁷ We may compare another passage of Plutarch’s with this analogy between self-knowledge and cosmetic adornment. At *Mor.* 42bff., Plutarch compares an audience member’s reaction to a public, philosophical lecture to a man looking in the mirror after receiving a hair-cut at the barber shop. He suggests that just as a man coming from the barber (κουρεῖον) needs “to stand in front of a mirror” (δεῖ τῷ κατόπτρῳ παραστῆναι) and inspect (ἐπισκοποῦντα) his new haircut and the difference it makes for his head, so also, one coming away from a public lecture must “look into himself” (ἀφορᾶν χρὴ πρὸς ἑαυτόν) and “inspect his soul” (καταμανθάνοντα τὴν ψυχὴν). The metaphor of cosmetic transformation is identical, but here, the metamorphosis has already taken place and the viewer/listener is merely double-checking to see if it looks good enough.

Diogenes Laertius.¹⁴⁸ It will be important to keep this ‘Socratic’ strand of the *extraspective* mirror in mind when we turn to Apuleius, who also cites a version of this didactic model, which transforms the Platonic self-knowledge tradition into the mirror of behavioral metamorphosis.

This ‘Socratic’ didactic *speculum* seems to rely on a concept of viewer response by which gazing upon grotesque appearances changes the behavior of the viewer. This type of response is embedded in the *speculum* tradition already in renditions of the myth of Athena and Marsyas, for instance, when Athena catches a glimpse of herself playing the αὐλός in a reflection from water and is disgusted by the appearance of her face. After being mocked by Marsyas, she decides never to play the αὐλός again, and Marsyas, in turn, becomes the new master of the instrument.¹⁴⁹ But again, in the period of the late 1st to 2nd century, this grotesque transformation in front of the mirror becomes another moralizing trope, which authors of philosophical treatises begin to use in reference to emotions or states of being that distort the face. In this way, Seneca suggests in *de Ira* (2.36.2) that it has proven beneficial (*profuit*) for angry men “to look at a mirror” (*aspexisse speculum*): by becoming angry, he explains, a great metamorphosis of their selves (*tanta mutatio sui*) has overtaken them; but the mirror, revealing the grotesque face mangled by emotion, brings them back to themselves. Any deviation from the normative standard of appearance, therefore, is a *mutatio*, and the counter-active transformation – the *re*-transformation, as it were – is effected through mirror-speculation. Diogenes Laertius shares another no doubt spurious anecdote about Plato that suggests a similar

¹⁴⁸ *Vit. Phil.* 2.33: ἡξίου δὲ καὶ τοὺς νέους συνεχῆς κατοπτρίζεσθαι, ἵν’ εἰ μὲν καλοὶ εἶεν, ἄξιοι γίγνοιτο· εἰ δ’ αἰσχροί, παιδείᾳ τὴν δυσείδειαν ἐπικαλύπτοιεν.

¹⁴⁹ See Taylor 2008, 26-31 for an analysis of this myth and its morally exemplary import.

normative function for the mirror (*Vit. Phil.* 3.39): Plato would advise drunk men to “mirror-gaze” (κατοπτρίζεσθαι), claiming that the activity would make them desire to “move away from such disfiguration” (ἀποστήσεσθαι γὰρ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀσχημοσύνης). This moralizing function of the mirror provides the negative analogue to the ‘Socratic’ teaching mirror, offering what Alexei Zadorojnyi has labeled “ethical therapy by deterrence”.¹⁵⁰

However, the use of the ‘Socratic’ didactic mirror and its negative counterpart was only one of the pedagogical mirrors that became widely popular in the Second Sophistic. As I suggested above, the proliferation of mirror metaphors, wherein any didactic tool could be analogized to a mirror both of self-knowledge and exemplary behavior, became quite diffuse and imprecise. If the ‘Socratic’ paideutic mirror is akin to Taylor’s *reflexive* function of the mirror (see n. 128 above), then the next version of the teaching mirror – the mirror of the text, which one could likely trace back to Alcidas’ *Odyssey*-κάτοπτρον and which became an authorizing pretext for moralizing, didactic literature – represents a *triangulative* relationship between viewer and *speculum*. In this case, the viewer looks upon an ‘other’, embedded in a text, and compares him- or herself to this model in a manner that is, similarly to the ‘Socratic’ mirror, related to behavior. If we were to step back and ask how texts and mirrors are in fact similar, we might be tempted to shrug and say outright that they are not, and we would be supported in this assessment at least by Aristotle, who complains of the imprecision of the mirror

¹⁵⁰ Zadorojnyi 2010, 172. There are instances in the Imperial period, though, where the grotesque appearance of a distorted face in the mirror is not a deterrent but an encouragement to more heinous acts, as in Suetonius’ anecdote that Caligula practiced horrible faces before a mirror to make his appearance even more savage (*Cal.* 50.1). Even Seneca’s Hostius Quadra episode – though itself transformed into a moralizing passage about true self-knowledge – demonstrates the danger of mirror speculation, in as much as Quadra’s twisted use of mirrors inspires more deviant desires and pleasurable delusions.

“metaphor” even as he quotes the Alcidas passage.¹⁵¹ However, as we are not attempting to assess the utility or success of the metaphor but rather to trace its lineage, we may more sympathetically note that the formal features – i.e., looking into a flat surface – as well as the dialogic or reciprocal encounter one has with both objects are analogous. As Shadi Bartsch says of the formation of selfhood vis-à-vis the *speculum*:

...the mirror provides a tool for the splitting of the viewer into viewing subject and viewed object, judging ‘I’ and judged-to-be-lacking ‘me.’...since the figure who judges the mirror-image in disgust has taken on the role of a dispassionate audience, the use of the mirror does, suggestively, reflect upon the idea that a dislocation, or self-splitting, of the ego into judger and judged could have a part to play in formulations of the ethical self. Such a dislocation could take visual or dialogic form; several of the mirror-viewers are urged to keep up a conversation with themselves as they gaze at their likenesses...¹⁵²

To apply this self-splitting to the mirror-text trope, therefore, just as mirroring provides the objectified self as a partner in dialectic, the text-*speculum* actually stands in metaphorically for a person – a biographical life, an exemplary character, a narrator – with whom the reader is engaged in a kind of dialogue. By way of example, we may consider Cicero’s encomium of the exemplary value of literature in the *Pro Archia*, though it can only be obliquely connected to the mirror via *mimesis*. There, the words of the text become “*imagines* depicted for us to gaze upon and imitate”:

¹⁵¹ In the passage of the *Rhetoric* where we find this quotation of Alcidas (*Rhet.* 3.3), Aristotle is discussing stylistic flaws – particularly in usage of metaphors – which lead to frigidity (τὸ ψυχρὸν) of style, either on account of ridiculousness (γελοῖον) or inappropriate and excessive tragic sense (τραγικόν).

¹⁵² See Bartsch 2006, 23-4. Cf. also McCarty 1989, 169, who points out that the exemplary mirror’s function seems to depend on two physical features of mirroring: “Two properties of the physical device are significant to the metaphor...: its responsiveness, mirroring the observer, change for change, in time; and objectification, capturing his changeable image in space and thus seeming to give it an almost independent being. Creating a personality would, then, be an interactive process: not simply adopting an external image as the self, but discovering the self by correspondence with an external world in which the observer finds himself mirrored. The result is an objectified soul, a personality provoked from without and ‘conjured up’ from within”.

quam multas nobis imagines non solum ad intuendum verum etiam ad imitandum fortissimorum virorum expressas scriptores et Graeci et Latini reliquerunt! quas ego mihi semper in administranda re publica proponens animum et mentem meam ipsa cogitatione hominum excellentium conformabam.

How many *images* of the strongest men carved for our benefit did the Greek and Latin writers leave behind – for us not only to gaze upon them but also to imitate them! Which, placing them before myself always as I administered the affairs of the Republic, I molded my soul and mind by means of the very cogitation of excellent men.

In a sweeping aesthetic metaphor, the words on the page are transformed into artistic depictions – the sculpted ancestor masks (*images*) – which one can hold in front (*proponens*) of one's face and with which one can have a dialogue. But importantly, this dialogue with the ancestor mask, which helps to transform the reader (*conformabam*), is not a conversation with a person, but with the very thought of excellent men. That is, the impact of ancestor *images* has the same metamorphic effect on the viewer as specular *images*, namely to form his or her moral behavior. With the subtle shift from the words of the text to the face of the character and finally to the very thought of the author or exemplary character, Cicero completely elides the troublesome problems of misinterpretation that were so bothersome to Plato.¹⁵³ When this conflation of the textual object and the person – historical, fictional, or narratorial – occurs in the context of the text-*speculum* trope proper, the “mirroring” that happens between reader and text blends this model of looking into an exemplary mask and conversing with men's *cogitatio* together with the Platonic, intersubjective encounter between two people looking into one another's “mirroring” eyes; but, again, the effect is rather different.

¹⁵³ We may once again compare this sentiment with the *Schriftkritik* of the *Phaedrus*, in which the image depicted in the words of the book is similar to a painting – note again the artistic metaphor for words on the page – which always misrepresents the cogitations of its progenitor.

We already saw one of the earliest ancestors of the exemplary text-*speculum* in my analysis of deep “looking” (*inspicere*). Recall how the comically strict father figure advised his lascivious son in Terence’s *Adelphoi* 415-7:

denique
inspicere tamquam in speculum in vitas omnium
iubeo, atque ex aliis sumere exemplum sibi.

Finally, I bid him to look into the lives of all men as if into a mirror and to take an example for himself from others.

As I suggested in the introduction, this passage became a *locus classicus* for biographers looking for an authorizing model to legitimize the genre. Indeed, we may see Demea’s advice to the young Ctesipho as a backdrop for many of the quintessentially Roman concerns with exemplarity, as has been shown by Roland Mayer.¹⁵⁴ Along these lines, perhaps the most famous passage on exemplarity – Livy’s programmatic aspiration to provide *omnis...exempli documenta* for the reader to “gaze upon” (*intueri*) in order to take models for “imitation” (*imitari*) or for “avoidance” (*vitare*) – seems to borrow concepts directly from the Terentian *speculum*.¹⁵⁵ In fact, even in the earliest usages of the word *speculum*, some scholars have suggested it can mean something closer to “model” or “standard” like the word *exemplum*.¹⁵⁶ We find the related prosthetic,

¹⁵⁴ Mayer 1991, 145, who interestingly also suggests Horace’s *Sat.* 1.4 as the other inaugural moment in the tradition of Roman exemplarity. In that poem, Horace’s father accompanied him on his way to school every day and pointed out negative and positive *exempla* for the young Horace to flee and imitate, respectively. Important for my point, this satire represents a programmatic claim for the calling of the satirist, who metaphorically provides the same didactic exemplary models in his text. Though not labeled a textual “mirror”, the conception of the text as a wise (*sapiens*) teacher is nonetheless participating in the same tradition.

¹⁵⁵ See Chaplin 2000. Moreover, as Andrew Feldherr has shown, Livy’s claim for presenting *exempla* is also framed in terms borrowed from the rhetorical tradition on *enargeia*, which is itself derived from Platonic and Aristotelian discussions of vividness in presentation (See Feldherr 1998, 1-12).

¹⁵⁶ See Callahan 1964, who is analyzing a curious line from Plautus’ *Mostellaria* (250-1). There, an older courtesan Scapha tells a younger one, whom she is helping to prepare for a lover, that she has no need of a

biographical mirror-text, in turn, most clearly illustrated in the programmatic prologue to Plutarch's *Timoleon-Aemilius* pair of lives (*Tim.* 1.1):

ἐμοὶ τῆς τῶν βίων ἄψασθαι μὲν γραφῆς συνέβη δι' ἑτέρους, ἐπιμένειν δὲ καὶ φιλοχωρεῖν ἤδη καὶ δι' ἑμαυτόν, ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ τῇ ἱστορίᾳ πειρώμενον ἅμῳ γέ πως κοσμεῖν καὶ ἀφομοιοῦν πρὸς τὰς ἐκείνων ἀρετὰς τὸν βίον.

It occurred to me to undertake the writing of my 'Lives' for the sake of others, but now, I am continuing the work and taking pleasure in it for my own sake also, attempting to adorn my life with history as if in front of a mirror, and to fashion it in conformity with the virtues of those men.

Here Plutarch borrows unashamedly from the realm of female adornment – i.e., in combining the verb κοσμέω with a metaphor of adornment vis-à-vis a mirror (ὥσπερ ἐν ἐσόπτρῳ) – to describe the process of growth in virtue: one does one's life up cosmetically, so to speak, by making him- or herself similar to an external, normative measurement. Thus, history, or rather the examples of famous men, provide a mirror in which one can adorn oneself and make his or her life similar (ἀφομοιόω) to the virtues of those men.¹⁵⁷ It is important for us to recognize the relationship between "life" (βίος) and "history" (ἱστορία), which, though not synonymous elsewhere in Plutarch,¹⁵⁸ nevertheless presents a subtle ambiguity between person and text. As Timothy Duff notes:

mirror (*quid opust speculo tibi*), since she is *speculo speculum maxumum*. See especially p. 6, where, as evidence of the exemplary nature of Philematium's superlative beauty, Callahan quotes a line from Cicero's *Rep.* 2.42.69 about how the statesman should behave in such a way *ut ad imitationem sui vocet alios, ut sese splendore animi et vitae suae sicut speculum praebeat civibus*. We can see the language of exemplarity retained (e.g., *imitatio*), which leads Callahan to connect both of these passages to Terence's mirror-of-lives. This semantic connection between *speculum* and *exemplum* would further connect the passage from Horace's *Epistles* 1.2 (analyzed in the introduction) to the Terentian mirror, at least insofar as the speaker tells the reader to look at Odysseus as an *exemplar*.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. the *imago virtutis* of the Roman tradition, which occurs in many formulations (e.g., the death of Seneca at Tac. *Ann.* 16.34 (*imaginem vitae suae*); Seneca's exhortation to Lucilius at *Ep.* 120.4-5 (*imago virtutis*); Seneca's desire to be like Cato, who is said to be *virtutum viva imago* at *Tranq.* 16.1). Cf. Mayer 1991.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. the famous programmatic claim in Plutarch's *Alex.* 1.2: "It is not histories I am writing, but lives" (οὔτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους). Although, there, too, the mimetic metaphor is invoked, whereby the narrator compares himself to a painter depicting the face and eyes of the subject (ὥσπερ οὖν οἱ

The mirror here is, on the one hand, the lives of virtuous men, in accordance with which Plutarch amends his own life. But, for his readers, the mirror is Plutarch's own literary work. The ambiguities of the terms 'history' and 'life' reinforce this double meaning.¹⁵⁹

After offering this moralizing preface, Plutarch immediately invokes Democritus, who apparently claimed that we should pray for good phantoms, or εἰδωλα, to come visit us, implying that historical figures presented via textual biography are precisely those positive phantoms that can lead us to virtue. It should be noted that here, Plutarch is playing on the polyvalence of the word εἰδωλα, which is also the term for the mirror-image in Democritean theories of vision.¹⁶⁰ The examples of good men are not merely the actualization of "phantoms" that visit us and teach us virtue; but, just like the death-masks or *imagines* in the Roman discussions of exemplarity, the εἰδωλα double as images in the mirror of history displayed for our contemplation and imitation.

The passage from Plutarch's *Quomodo Quis suos in Virtute Profectus Sentiat*, which I discussed in the introduction, can also be situated in this text-*speculum* tradition. We may recall that there Plutarch framed the activity of reading as a high-stakes choice – one that he interestingly connects to Hesiod's "two roads": just as a bee flits from flower to flower in search of pollen, certain men find serious sentiments (τι σπουδῆς ἄξιον) in

ζωγράφοι τὰς ὁμοιότητας ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ τῶν περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἰδῶν) and capturing the "signs of his soul" (τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς σημεῖα). Again, the text is conflated with the actual person, and the act of reading is likened to looking into the face (and soul) of the subject of the biography.

¹⁵⁹ See Duff 2005, 33. Then, he proceeds to explain how there is a double meaning in the semantic range of both terms, with ἱστορία referring to past events as well as the act of researching past events and with βίος meaning both the character and career of a man, and the written record associated with it.

¹⁶⁰ The εἰδωλον is a key term of Democritean and Epicurean optics, functioning as the image of the emanation of an object, which enters and penetrates the eyes of the beholder. See Burkert 1977, 103-6, who discusses how Democritus likely wrote a treatise called Περὶ τῶν εἰδώλων and traces how Democritus' atomist theories of vision passed through Epicurus and Theophrastus into the work of Lucretius. Of particular interest is how Epicurus dispenses of Democritus' theory of "air-imprints" (ἀπορροή), but generalizes the theory of εἰδωλα for his own version of optics: οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐναποσφραγίσαιτο τὰ ἔξω τὴν ἑαυτῶν φύσιν τοῦ τε χρώματος καὶ τῆς μορφῆς διὰ τοῦ ἀέρος τοῦ μεταξὺ ἡμῶν τε καὶ κείνων (Epist. 1.49; cf. Burkert 1977, 104 n. 40 for further discussion).

literature read for pleasure (ἡδονῆς ἔνεκα καὶ παιδιᾶς). The seriousness vs. pleasure dichotomy established in Plutarch's theory of active reading sets the stage for the appropriate reader-response that he outlines a little further in the treatise: a serious reader's reaction to moral exemplars should be "emulation" (ζῆλος) and the "desire to do what we marvel at" (τὸ ποιεῖν εἶναι προθύμους ἃ θαυμάζομεν); one means of doing this is to look to moral exemplars like Socrates or Plato – "to hold them before our eyes" (τίθεσθαι πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τοὺς ὄντας ἀγαθοὺς ἢ γενομένου)¹⁶¹ – and to ask what they would do in a given situation. In that way, we adorn ourselves and change our forms as if before mirrors (οἷον πρὸς ἔσοπτρα κοσμοῦντας ἑαυτοὺς καὶ μεταρρυθμίζοντας). Again, we see the trivial activity of adornment (κοσμέω) before the mirror conflated with a theory of moral transformation (μεταρρυθμίζω).¹⁶² The affective response of marvel or wonder, which inspires the Plutarchan reader to look into the didactic mirror of *exempla*, will also play an important role in Apuleius' version of mirror-gazing and its pedagogic effect. In fact, there is a direct correlation between the phenomena in Plutarch: desire for emulation is first conceived through awe, which, in turn, leads the reader to place biographical images before his or her eyes and try to adorn his or her soul accordingly. We will see later how this, too, is fundamental to the philosopher's journey. But what

¹⁶¹ No doubt, this line also alludes to the rhetorical tradition on *ekphrasis*, defined (though not given the appellation '*ekphrasis*') in Aristotle, in which the object of description is "as if brought before the eyes of the viewer" (see, e.g., Aristotle's *Rhet.* 1411a-b, with the multiple recurrences of the phrase πρὸ ὀμμάτων). Cf. Webb 2009.

¹⁶² Interestingly, this word μεταρρυθμίζω appears in Plato's bewildering description of optics and dreams in the *Timaeus* (46a1 ff.): the fire within the eyes wells up while we sleep with our eyes closed and creates all kinds of φαντάσματα. Plato then analogizes this phenomenon to image-making in mirrors (περὶ τὴν τῶν κατόπτρων εἰδωλοποιίαν), which occurs when the inner and outer fire meet and create a variegated deflection or transformation (πολλαχῇ μεταρρυθμισθέντος). Plutarch borrows this image, one could argue, from the transformation or deflection of εἰδῶλα in the mirror, but applies it to an internal metamorphosis of character.

represents in Plato a journey toward the knowledge of a metaphysical soul achieved through a transcendent experience, becomes in Plutarch a tool for behavioral metamorphosis. One primps oneself up with the actions viewed in the *extraspective* mirror, not with the transcendent self-knowledge acquired through it.

Another, somewhat subtler conflation of text and narrator in the *extraspective* mirror is Seneca's well-known address to Nero in *de Clementia*, which we also encountered in the introduction:

Scribere de clementia, Nero Caesar, institui, ut quodam modo *speculi* vice fungerer et te tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium.

I decided to write about clemency, Nero Caesar, in order that I might function in some way like a mirror and reveal you to yourself, (showing) that you will come to the greatest pleasure of all (people/pleasures).

There is a strange slippage in the text-mirror formulation of this passage, which is worth dwelling on briefly. While it is clear that the mirror-as-philosophical-tool grants Seneca a safe position from which to take a didactic stance vis-à-vis his political superior,¹⁶³ it is odd how he accomplishes this stance by conflating himself with a text and apparently promising both a dialogic interaction and a prophetic encounter. In a literal sense, the narrator, Seneca, is promising to *be* the mirror: “so that *I* might function as a mirror”. But the textual medium is highlighted as well – *scribere...institui*¹⁶⁴; Seneca is not actually a Platonic interlocutor for Nero, but his text is his voice, or his face, and the request is that Nero look into his textual face, or in other words, that Nero treat him like an instrument

¹⁶³ See, e.g., Braund 2009, 154 *ad loc.*: “The image of the mirror is a commonplace which goes back to at least Plato...But Seneca's use of it in this context is ingenious. It allows him to avoid the inherent difficulty of giving advice to an emperor - a difficulty recognized by Plutarch in *Ad Principem Ineruditum* at *Mor.* 779e and one which was always likely to be a problem for Seneca, as the teacher of Nero...- by appearing to praise Nero through simply acting as his mirror”.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: “It is also unclear whether the mirror consists of the text itself or of Seneca, as the first-person verb *fungerer* suggests.”

for the acquisition of self-knowledge in the Platonic sense (cf. the purpose of mirrors in the *Nat. Quaest.* passage: *ut homo ipse se nosset*). If we scrutinize the future participle (*perventurum*), it seems that the text-mirror is both a prophecy and a manual for how to fulfill the prophecy.¹⁶⁵ Seneca-the-narrator will provide the exemplary models for Nero to emulate.¹⁶⁶ This is more than Umberto Eco's formulation that the text-mirror works by analogy to the mirror-as-prosthetic-device which enables the reader/viewer to see him- or herself and thereby glean self-knowledge.¹⁶⁷ The text/narrator does ask the reader/viewer to identify with elements embedded in the text, thereby making him or her implicated in the reading experience as a viewer in a mirror would be implicated.¹⁶⁸ But this is also a journey narrative (*pervenire*), and the narrator-*speculum* points (*ostendere*)¹⁶⁹ the way toward pleasure (*voluptas*), a strange end point of mirror-speculation, considering the traditional models of self-knowledge and emulation.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, if we look a couple

¹⁶⁵ The usage of a future participle here seems to express purpose (*NLS* 92). Cf. Braund 2009, 154 *ad loc.*: "The mirror image is clever especially because it can be interpreted descriptively – representing Nero's present state – or prescriptively – representing an idealized state". This descriptive vs. prescriptive distinction gets to the heart of the difference between Platonic and Second Sophistic uses of the trope.

¹⁶⁶ Such as, e.g., Augustus, who is explicitly rejected as a viable *exemplar* in the *Praefatio*, but then, is later invoked as an *exemplum*. Cf. Mayer 1991 on this moment in *de Clementia*.

¹⁶⁷ For Eco's analysis of the 'prosthetic' function of the mirror, see Eco 1986.

¹⁶⁸ See Ker 2009, 264-5: "Given that the text is conceived of as a mirror, the reader-viewer is implicitly invited to relate to persons and objects mentioned in the text...in an effort of self-identification".

¹⁶⁹ It is possible that Apuleius knew this famous moment from *de Clementia*. We may compare this entire formulation – "showing the way toward pleasure" – with the opening passage of book 2 of Apuleius' *de Platone: Moralis philosophiae caput est, Faustine fili, ut scias quibus ad beatam vitam perveniri rationibus possit. Verum ut beatitudinem bonorum fine ante alia contingere putes, ostendam quae de hoc Plato senserit*. Similarly to Seneca's *praefatio*, this book opening of a text on moral philosophy promises to show (*ostendere*) the reader a way to "travel to the good life" (*perveniri*). But, in this case, the dialogue is with Plato himself (*Plato senserit*). It is possible that Apuleius alludes specifically to this opening passage of *de Clementia* with the didactic display of the journey, but one would not want to put too much weight on the possible intertext.

¹⁷⁰ See Bartsch 2006, 184-5 for an interpretation of the twisted blend of mirror traditions and sexual implications in this passage: "What the mirror of the text promises to show Nero, if he succeeds in ethical rulership, is not self-knowledge – however pleasant it may be to inspect a good conscience – or a profitable estrangement from the self, but rather *voluptas*, a term that is distinctly sensual in its connotations. The only other occasions on which this word is employed in Latin texts in connection with a specular image are in Seneca's treatment of the orgiastic Hostius in the *Naturales Quaestiones* and by the author of Justinian's

lines further in the text, we see how this *triangulative* relationship between text-mirror, narrator, and reader actually inspires a dialogue with the self: after “looking deep” (*inspicere*) into his own conscience and then “casting his eyes” (*inmittere oculos*) upon the multitude – both activities paradoxically accomplished through looking into the text – Nero’s third and final (putative) action is to “speak with himself” (*loqui secum*). Again, I would suggest that Plato’s mirror of erotic dialectic lurks uncomfortably behind the interactive model of exemplary mirroring here: whereas in Plato, an actual dialogue with another person causes one to see one’s self as he or she essentially is, the text-*speculum* in the opening of Seneca’s treatise asks the reader to look into the text and then have a dialogue with himself, where the self is objectified into an ‘other’, with whom Nero interacts in order to see himself. The text holds up a partner in dialectic, which paradoxically becomes an objectified version of the self that can serve as the Platonic other.

We find an application of the trope similar to Seneca’s narrator-text-mirror in Lucian’s *How to Write History*, where the historian’s mind, Lucian argues, must be like a mirror in its mimetic clarity.

μάλιστα δὲ κατόπτρῳ ἐοικυῖαν παρασχέσθω τὴν γνώμην ἀθόλῳ καὶ στιλπνῷ καὶ ἀκριβεῖ τὸ κέντρον, καὶ ὁποίας ἂν δέξεται τὰς μορφὰς τῶν ἔργων, τοιαῦτα καὶ δεικνύτω αὐτά, διάστροφον δὲ ἢ παράχρουν ἢ ἑτερόσχημον μηδέν.

Above all, let him bring a mind similar to a mirror, clear, gleaming-bright, precisely centered, displaying the shape of events just as he receives them, free from distortion, false coloring, and misrepresentation.

Digest – when he dismisses the mirror as a tool for pleasure...in both these Senecan examples, the mirror of self-knowledge returns not a Platonic truth or an ethical exhortation, but a distorted view that brings pleasure and that confirms the viewer in, not dissuades him from his willfulness...in introducing this terminology, then, Seneca has mingled two mirror traditions: he has introduced the erotic pleasure of the mirror of vanity into the corrective usage of the mirror of self-improvement”.

In fact, this appeal to the mirror-like mind of the historian becomes somewhat paradoxical as well, as the narrator proceeds to explain how the historian is akin to a great sculptor, such as Phidias, Praxiteles, or Alcamenes: he does not create the raw material – the gold, the silver, or the ivory are given to him; rather, his job is “to give a fine arrangement of events and illuminate them as vividly as possible” (καλὸν διαθέσθαι τὰ πεπραγμένα καὶ εἰς δύναμιν ἐναργέστατα ἐπιδείξαι αὐτά) so that when a man has heard them, he thinks he “is actually seeing what is being described” (ὁρᾷν τὰ λεγόμενα).¹⁷¹ Once again, we should note the elusive slippage between narrator and text, whereby the reader simultaneously becomes a hearer (ἀκροώμενος) and a viewer of the narrator’s mimetic project. The text is elided and only “the events” are left to be gazed upon. The historian is thus imagined to be a creator of a kind of *trompe l’oeil* mirror, into which the reader can gaze and see the events themselves.

Even theatrical spectacles in the Second Sophistic were accorded the status of a “didactic mirror”, inaugurating a trope that seems to represent the ancestor to the Renaissance “mirror of drama”, wherein the stage is conceived of as providing for viewers “a glass, a mirrour of *Truth*, to see their *Deformities* in, as well as *Beauty*”.¹⁷² If we trace Alcidas’ *Odyssey*-mirror along a path different from the text-*speculum*, we see that both Cicero and Livius Andronicus were said to have made claims for the catoptric verisimilitude of the genre of comedy. In a comment we find in Donatus’ 4th

¹⁷¹ We may see in this passage another instance where the terminology (e.g., ἐναργέστατα; ὁρᾷν τὰ λεγόμενα) is borrowed from the rhetorical tradition on *ekphrasis* – a tradition to which both Livy and Plutarch also allude in their programmatic statements about exemplary historiography. See n. 161 above. More will be said in chapter 2 about Apuleius’ use of the rhetorical tradition on *ekphrasis*.

¹⁷² Anonymous 1972 [1699] 81, quoted in Lada-Richards 2005, 340.

century commentary on Terence, we learn that Cicero called comedy “an imitation of life, a mirror of custom, and an image of truth” (*imitationem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis*); and similarly, that Livius Andronicus considered *comoedia* to be a “mirror of daily life” (*cotidianae vitae speculum*).¹⁷³ But, if we once again move into the Second Sophistic, where these tropes take on a life of their own, we find one of the most explicit instances of the spectacle-*speculum* in Lucian’s *de Saltatione*.¹⁷⁴ There, the main narrator Lycinus eulogizes the pedagogic influence of a precise and well-ordered pantomime dance. At *de Salt.* 72, the spectacle (τὸ θέατρον) is said to give the audience a “better character” (ἀμείνων τὸ ἦθος) by educating the moral disposition of viewers (τὰ ἦθη τῶν ὁρώντων παιδαγωγοῦν). Lycinus goes on to explain at 81 how the paideutic effect of the dance is complete when each of the spectators “recognizes his/her own characteristics [in the dance]” (γνωρίζῃ τὰ αὐτοῦ) or when he or she “sees him- or herself in the dancer as if in a mirror” (ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ τῷ ὀρχηστῇ βλέπῃ). It is at that time that beholders “cannot restrain themselves because of pleasure” (οὐδὲ κατέχειν ἑαυτοὺς...ὅφ’ ἡδονῆς δύνανται); they “see the εἰκόνες of [their] own souls” (τὰς τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς ἑκαστος εἰκόνας ὁρῶντες) and through the spectacle, they fully accomplish the Delphic maxim (τὸ Δελφικὸν ἐκεῖνο τὸ Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν), “having learned what they should choose and what they should avoid, and having been taught what they previously didn’t know” (ἃ τε χρὴ αἰρεῖσθαι καὶ ἃ φεύγειν μεμαθηκότες καὶ ἃ

¹⁷³ For the first quotation, see *Evanthii Excerpta de Comoedia* V.1.19-20: *comoediam esse Cicero ait imitationem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis*. For the second, see V.5.14ff.: *aitque (sc. Livius Andronicus) esse comoediam cotidianae vitae speculum, nec iniuria. nam ut intenti speculo veritatis liniamenta facile per imaginem colligimus, ita lectione comoediae imitationem vitae consuetudinisque non aegerrime animadvertimus*. For discussion, see Wessner 1962 (also cited in Lada-Richards 2005, 344 n. 17).

¹⁷⁴ See Lada-Richards 2005 for an excellent treatment of this passage. Cf. Petrides 2013 for helpful analysis of this text more broadly.

πρότερον ἡγνούνουν διδαχθέντες). A satirical mix of Terence’s biographical mirror, which tells us what to pursue and what to flee,¹⁷⁵ and a deeper Platonic investigation of the Delphic maxim and true self-knowledge, Lucian’s mirror of the pantomime dance may offer one of the clearest models for what we will shortly see in Apuleius. That is, the moralizing effect of the dance and the improvement of character brought about through exemplary emulation are blended with Platonic models of viewing, wherein the spectator of beauty cannot control himself (οὐδὲ κατέχειν... δύνανται)¹⁷⁶ and acquires self-knowledge, seeing him- or herself “as if in a mirror” (ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ; cf. the discussion of this Platonic phrase and its *Nachleben* in chapter 3). Indeed, at the end of the dialogue, Lycinus depicts the internal reaction his interlocutor will have, if he attends the spectacle as a viewer, as a metamorphosis and a conversion of the soul. Similarly to Circe’s potion, he says, a viewer “drinks down the drugs” of the spectacle; unlike Odysseus and his companions, though, the viewer does not grow the head of an ass or the heart of a pig (οὐκ ὄνου κεφαλὴν ἢ συὸς καρδίαν ἔξεις), but has a transformation of the soul through enchantment (θελχθήσῃ) and pleasure (ὕφ’ ἡδονῆς). Just as Homer describes the golden wand of Hermes, the narrator concludes, the dance “charms the eyes” (ὄμματα θέλγει) of the viewer and “rouses [his mind] to wakefulness” (ὕπνῳντας ἐγείρει).

¹⁷⁵ It should be noted that we saw this pattern – *exempla* for pursuit and avoidance – in all of the passages on exemplarity, including those that made explicit reference to a *speculum*. From Terence and Livy to Seneca, Plutarch, and Lucian, the exemplary viewing of mirrors and *mimesis* seems to inspire the same external comparison between visible virtues of characters/lives and the reader’s social appearance. See Chaplin 2015 for more discussion of how Livian *exempla* function in precisely this manner.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. the obedient horse of the *Phaedrus*, which must “hold itself back from leaping on the beloved” (ἐαυτὸν κατέχει μὴ ἐπιπηδᾶν τῷ ἐρωμένῳ), while the disobedient horse refuses to respond to goads or whips (254a2): . Cf. also Alcibiades’ description of the effect of seeing the εἰκόνες of Socrates and listening to his words (215a4ff.): people become “dumbstruck and possessed (i.e. not in possession of themselves)” (ἐκπεπληγμένοι ἐσμέν καὶ κατεχόμεθα).

We know that Apuleius was, at least, aware of these various strands of the didactic mirror trope because he seems to quote Alcidas' *Odyssey*-κάτοπτρον at the end of his treatise *de deo Socratis* and, similarly to other writers of his milieu, to conflate a number of these traditions in that allusion. At *DDS* 158, at a point in the discussion where Apuleius searches for analogies for the figure of Socrates to more fully explicate his dual mastery of *sapientia* and *divinatio*, he resorts to a popular type of Homeric allegorical moralizing. He tells his addressee that one can discern exemplary models of behavior “in Homer as if in a large mirror” (*DDS* 158: *an non apud Homerum, ut <in> quodam ingenti speculo, claritus cernis haec...officia*). But just as in the Plutarchan mirror of lives or the exemplary *speculum* of *personae*,¹⁷⁷ Homer-the-author is quickly replaced by his characters, who, in turn, become the behavioral models for imitation. As the first catoptric *exemplum*, Apuleius chooses Nestor, the Pylian orator, who “could warn [Achilles and Agamemnon] with *exempla* and charm them with speech” (*exemplis moneat, oratione permulceat*); the reason for such a choice is that Nestor was strong in *prudentia* and his words “flowed with sweetness” (*dulcedine adfluere*). Other Homeric *exempla* – Odysseus, Diomedes, and Calchas – follow after in quick succession; ultimately, they set up the conclusion of the treatise, at which point, Apuleius delivers a classic diatribe to his reader: the mirror of Homeric *exempla* and the way in which Socrates perfectly embodies all of the ideal character traits ought to “rouse the reader to

¹⁷⁷ We may adduce as evidence for the “mirror of characters” a passage from Cicero’s *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino*, which Lada-Richard 2005, 345 also uses to trace the early history of the mirror of drama. At *Pro Rosc.* 47, Cicero discusses once again the mimetic verisimilitude of the *personae* of comedy: *etenim haec conficta arbitror esse a poetis, ut effictos nostros mores in alienis personis expressamque imaginem nostrae vitae cotidianae videremus*.

the study of wisdom” (*ad studium sapientiae erigeris*),¹⁷⁸ engendering in him or her the desire to be praised “just as Accius praised Odysseus” (*ut Accius Ulixen laudavit*) and helping the reader to recognize the lessons about wisdom (*sapientia*) and prudence (*prudentia*) that “Homer teaches [us]” (*Homerus docet*) in the character of Odysseus.¹⁷⁹ We see in this complicated conflation of exemplary mirroring not merely a happenstance allusion to Alcidas’ beautiful κάτοπτρον of the *Odyssey*, but indeed, a dense interweaving of text, character, and story into a *triangulative* and *extraspective* mirror of behavior. Not only are each of these characters paradoxically *specula* of Socrates, revealing elements of Socrates’ genius in their own admirable character traits, but together with Socrates they are held up as a mirror for the reader – both an exhortation towards and a model of doing philosophy. And just as in Lucian’s mirror of the dance, this concluding exemplary mirror of Homer has the effect of rousing the reader towards philosophy – towards a conversion to philosophy¹⁸⁰ – through pleasurable words and stories. As the Pylian orator “charms” (*permulcere*)¹⁸¹ the quarreling Achilles and

¹⁷⁸ Here, I follow Rohde’s conjecture, *erigeris*, for the corrupt text, as Harrison appears also to do in his translation (Harrison, et al. 2001). A good argument could be made on analogy to Lucian’s “mirror of the dance”, which “wakes up” (ἐγείρει) or “rouses” the mind to philosophical study “through pleasure” (ὕφ’ ἡδονῆς). The concept of waking up the sleeping mind *ad studium sapientiae* seems to be a propos for the traditional Cynic diatribe, but also has its Platonic antecedent in the famous discussion of the *Phaedrus* about the charming cicadas who put their unphilosophical listeners to sleep with a pleasurable song (see *Phaedr.* 258e6-259b2).

¹⁷⁹ On how this passage participates in the tradition of Homeric moralizing allegory, as exemplified, e.g., in Horace’s “other *Ars Poetica*” (*Epist.* 1.2), see Hunter 2014b.

¹⁸⁰ On the concept of the “conversion to philosophy”, which Apuleius models in some way or another in each of his works and which he exhorts his readers/listeners to through protreptic images, see again Fletcher 2014.

¹⁸¹ It is useful to compare this word choice, *permulcere*, not only with the Prologue to the *Met.*, as we will in chapter 4, but also with the biography of Plato, in which we hear of Socrates’ dream that the swan of Cupid flew out of his lap, “charming the ears of men and gods with its musical song” (*canore musico auditus hominum deorumque mulcentem*). This swan, of course, turns out to be Plato. This line represents one of the primary pieces of evidence for Richard Fletcher’s thesis that Apuleius’ version of Platonic philosophy is an aestheticized blend of *ratio* and *oratio* (Fletcher 2014). The exemplary reference to Nestor from the *DDS* adds one more piece of evidence to this position.

Agamemnon with his flowing and *dulcis oratio*, and warns them “with *exempla*”, so also the narrator of *de deo Socratis* shows us Homeric spectacles and attempts to charm our eyes (and souls) awake (cf. Lucian's ὄμματα θέλγει above).

In our brief survey and exegesis of the didactic mirror trope, we have seen not only an increased frequency of usage of the metaphor in the Imperial period and the Second Sophistic but also a certain malleability of the *speculum* tradition and a willingness on the part of authors to blend previously separate models of mirror-speculation. We saw in Seneca a masterful mixing of the Platonic mirror of self-knowledge and dialectic with the erotic, female adornment function of the mirror in the concluding word *voluptas*; while in Plutarch, we encountered even words and phrases lifted directly from the Platonic γνῶθι σεαυτόν tradition and re-appropriated to the context of character adornment. Socrates himself became an authorizing voice for the didactic mirror into which beautiful and ugly viewers gaze in order to improve their internal virtue, and even Plato managed to take on an authoritative role in the *extraspective* mirror of deterrence. What all of these *extraspective* mirrors have in common, though, is an apparently un-Platonic model of selfhood, which conceives of the internal and external dichotomy entirely differently from the ideal found in Platonic dialogues: the self is the social self, embedded in and defined by social and political relationships. In every case, however, the didactic *speculum* inspires a metamorphosis, or a “conversion” of a sort. Along these lines, we may again see the Second Sophistic version of the didactic mirror as another instance of the high-stakes choice narrative. Lucian’s ironically didactic mirror of the dance could perhaps provide the most à propos analogy for what we will encounter in Apuleius. The way in which he takes Platonically

inflected concepts such as the εἰκόνες of the soul¹⁸² and divine possession from pleasure at a sight and combines them with an exemplary spectacle could be seen as a model for Apuleius' parodic blending of traditions. When viewers stare into the “mirror of the dance”, they encounter ethical models for living – both positive and negative *exempla* – and are forced to feel a kind of dangerous stupefaction that could possess them to follow one of models, for better or for worse.

2. The κάτοπτρον in Alcibiades I:

Now that we have seen the appropriation and popularization of the exemplary mirror trope, it will be beneficial for us to analyze more closely the original Platonic model of selfhood and the illuminating mirror in order to see just how cleverly Apuleius jumps between two traditions as if performing a circus trick. When we transition to the *Metamorphoses* and consider the mirrors into which Lucius (and by extension, the reader) gaze, we will encounter the full spectrum of Plato's complicated and ambivalent relationship to catoptric *mimesis* and Apuleius' deep engagement with it. In what follows, however, we will open our discussion of Plato in the way one was expected to in antiquity, namely with *Alcibiades I*, where the “mirror of another's soul” is the primary means for fulfilling the Delphic maxim, γνῶθι σεαυτόν.

¹⁸² Cf. *Phaedrus* 246a4ff., where Socrates develops a likeness, or an analogy for the soul: οἷον μὲν ἐστὶ, πάντῃ πάντως θείας εἶναι καὶ μακρῶς διηγήσεως, ὃ δὲ εἰκονεῖται, ἀνθρωπίνης τε καὶ ἐλάττωτος. Cf. also the εἰκόνες of Socrates in *Symposium* 215a5ff.

While the question of the authenticity of this dialogue is still up in the air,¹⁸³ the scholarly community is beginning to settle, it would seem, in favor of Platonic authorship.¹⁸⁴ However, whether or not Plato wrote this dialogue is immaterial to my investigation, in a sense, because I am interested in how Apuleius and his contemporaries read this dialogue and considered it authentic rather than the modern *communis opinio*.¹⁸⁵ In this regard, it is important to note that the *Alcibiades I* was often the first Platonic text for a student of philosophy because it seemed to encompass *in nuce* Platonic questions that arise in the rest of the corpus.¹⁸⁶ We know, too, that Apuleius himself read the dialogue because he quotes it in the *Apologia*.¹⁸⁷ Though the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium* were the most likely candidates for allusion and interpretation in the Second

¹⁸³ The authenticity of *Alcibiades I* was never questioned in antiquity. In fact, Schleiermacher was the first to question the dialogue's authenticity in the 19th century, explaining that the dialogue is "very insignificant and poor, and that to such a degree, that we cannot ascribe it to Plato" (Schleiermacher 1836, 329). See Denyer 2001, 14-26 for a full exposition of the arguments for and against authenticity. Cf. Bartsch 2006.

¹⁸⁴ See Annas 1985; Goldin 1993; Pradeu 1999. See also Bartsch 2006, 41-2, whose reading of authenticity I am largely following here, particularly because she is also more interested in the dialogues reception than its relation to other dialogues.

¹⁸⁵ Denyer 2001, 14: "In ancient times, no one ever doubted that Plato wrote the *Alcibiades*. This is not because the ancients casually described as 'Plato's' any work written in an approximately Platonic manner; on the contrary, several such works...were circulated under the description 'bastards' (νόθοι), to distinguish them from Plato's lawful offspring...Nor was the absence of doubts about the authenticity of our *Alcibiades* due to any neglect of the dialogue. It was frequently read, and frequently cited under Plato's name...Some thought indeed that the *Alcibiades* deserved to be the first dialogue read by someone starting to read Plato".

¹⁸⁶ See Bartsch 2006, 41, who uses the phrase *in nuce*. For ancient testimonials, see Olympiodorus *In Platonis Alcibiadem commentarii* 10.18-11.6, who called this dialogue the 'gateway' (προπολαίσις) to Platonic philosophy, and Proclus *In Platonis Alcibiadem i* 11.1-21, where Proclus explains how this dialogue represents a unitary and comprehensive view of all of Platonic philosophy and says that it is 'the beginning of all philosophy, just as also self-knowledge is' (ἀρχὴ δὲ ἐστὶν οὗτος ὁ διάλογος ἀπάσης φιλοσοφίας, ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ ἡ ἐαυτῶν γνῶσις). Cf. Forde 1987, 222 (quoted in Bartsch 2006, 41): "The neo-Platonist Iamblichus wrote that the *Alcibiades I* contains the whole philosophy of Plato, as in a seed. The Islamic sage and Platonic commentator Alfarabi concurs, saying in effect that in the *Alcibiades I* all the Platonic questions are raised as if for the first time."

¹⁸⁷ In the *Apologia*, the quotation of *Alcibiades I* (*Apol.* 25.11) provides the definitional basis from which Apuleius begins to refute the main charge of using magic to seduce Pudentilla. The precise quotation only differs slightly from the transmitted text of Plato (see Hunink 1997, 89 *ad loc.*; cf. Helm's apparatus in Helm 1963).

Sophistic,¹⁸⁸ the *Alcibiades I* nevertheless provided a model of selfhood, erotic love, education, and fulfillment of the Delphic oracle that would be expounded upon in those later dialogues.¹⁸⁹ Reframing the Platonic mirror in terms of adorning the self with virtue could thus be a play on this dialogue, which most clearly articulates what a self is. That ancient readers considered the question of selfhood to be the primary investigation of *Alcibiades I* is further proven by the subtitle that ancient commentators appended to it, “On the Nature of Man”.¹⁹⁰

Before we analyze the mirror scene proper, we should consider briefly how Plato arrives at the mirror as a metaphor for seeing the soul. The dialogue opens with Socrates finally breaking a long held silence and professing his love for Alcibiades, whom he loved from afar up to the (dramatic) time that this dialogue takes place. Socrates was one of many ἐρασταί of Alcibiades, but he kept silent because his divine sign warned him to stay away. In the interim, though, Socrates observed Alcibiades, watching how he scorned many lovers in his youth because he was beautiful – like Narcissus, we may note – and put them to flight. With this playful opening, Plato subtly introduces a question, which, in turn, leads to the primary investigation of the dialogue: why does Socrates continue to pursue Alcibiades after his beauty has faded and all other lovers have left?

¹⁸⁸ See, e.g., Trapp 1990; Hunter 2012; Fletcher 2014.

¹⁸⁹ The dating of the *Alcibiades I* is also indeterminate. Denyer 2001 considers it to be a late dialogue on the grounds that Plato’s motivations for writing it may have been due to his own love affair with Dion of Syracuse and his own failed attempt to teach the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius. But I am inclined to side with Bartsch 2006, 42 that this represents an early work of Plato because it does not contain any of the analogies between the philosophic journey and θεωρία, on which the major middle and late dialogues are entirely based (see Nightingale 2004, among others). To suggest that Plato dispensed with this essential metaphor in a late dialogue, which was concerned with the same primary questions, seems to me more implausible than the notion that Plato had not yet developed this overarching metaphor for the philosophical journey when he wrote this text. Though, once again, the actual dating of the text does not so much matter for my interests, but rather, how ancient readers understood this dialogue in relation to the rest of the Platonic corpus.

¹⁹⁰ See Scott 2000, 82 for a discussion of the ancient commentator tradition.

The answer, we later find out, is that Socrates is an ἐραστής of Alcibiades' soul, not of his body. In fact, all of Alcibiades' other so-called ἐρασταί were never really lovers at all because all they wanted was Alcibiades' body. Those so-called 'lovers' cease loving once the bloom of beauty disappears¹⁹¹; Socrates, on the other hand, is and always was the only ἐραστής of Alcibiades because he loves who Alcibiades truly is.¹⁹² While the line of argument to get to this point travels a rather circuitous route, the answer to this persistent question is the immediate consequence of the conclusion reached at 130c1-3, namely that a human being is nothing other than the soul.¹⁹³ The model of selfhood in the Platonic paradigm is, therefore, abstracted from any external features that would traditionally define a person; it is the internal – what is beneath the exterior envelope of skin – that truly makes people who they are. As such, this set up for the later mirroring scene enables the development of an optical paradigm in which self-knowledge and true erotic love are more fully explicated.¹⁹⁴

In light of this new Platonic model of selfhood, Socrates and Alcibiades attempt once again to solve the problem of fulfilling the Delphic oracle, and Socrates forges the way toward a new interpretation of the exhortation to know oneself by employing an analogy to the mirroring phenomenon that occurs between two eyes looking into one

¹⁹¹ *Alcib. I* 131c6ff.: εἰ ἄρα τις γέγονεν ἐραστής τοῦ Ἀλκιβιάδου σώματος, οὐκ Ἀλκιβιάδου ἄρα ἠράσθη ἀλλὰ τινος τῶν Ἀλκιβιάδου...οὐκοῦν ὁ μὲν τοῦ σώματός σου ἐρῶν, ἐπειδὴ λήγει ἀνθοῦν, ἀπιὼν οἴχεται;

¹⁹² *Alcib. I* 131e8: τοῦτο τοίνυν αἴτιον, ὅτι μόνος ἐραστής ἦν σός, οἱ δ' ἄλλοι τῶν σῶν: τὰ δὲ σὰ λήγει ὥρας, σὺ δ' ἄρχῃ ἀνθεῖν.

¹⁹³ *Alcib. I* 130c1-3: ἐπειδὴ δ' οὔτε σῶμα οὔτε τὸ συναμφοτέρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, λείπεται οἶμαι ἢ μηδὲν αὐτ' εἶναι, ἢ εἴπερ τί ἐστι, μηδὲν ἄλλο τὸν ἄνθρωπον συμβαίνειν ἢ ψυχὴν.

¹⁹⁴ See Wohl 2013, 46: "The observation that the soul is the self is thus offered as a key not only to self-knowledge but also to true love: Socrates is Alcibiades' only real *erastēs*...The paradigmatic eye is a lover's eye and that into which it gazes is the eye of its beloved. In the context of the dialogue's erotic scenario, then, the optical paradigm becomes paradigmatic for a mode of philosophical *erōs*".

another. At 132d5, he asks what the Delphic oracle would mean if it addressed a human eye (I print below the entire interaction):

Σωκράτης: σκόπει καὶ σύ. εἰ ἡμῶν τῷ ὀμματι ὥσπερ ἀνθρώπῳ συμβουλευῶν εἶπεν ‘ιδεῖ σαυτόν,’ πῶς ἂν ὑπελάβομεν τί παραινεῖν; ἄρα οὐχὶ εἰς τοῦτο βλέπειν, εἰς ὃ βλέπων ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς ἐμελλεν αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: δῆλον.

Σωκράτης: ἐννοῶμεν δὴ εἰς τί βλέποντες τῶν ὄντων ἐκεῖνό τε ὀρῶμεν ἅμα ἂν καὶ ἡμᾶς αὐτούς;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: δῆλον δὴ, ὦ Σώκρατες, ὅτι εἰς κάτοπτρά τε καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα.

Σωκράτης: ὀρθῶς λέγεις. οὐκοῦν καὶ τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ ὃ ὀρῶμεν ἐνεστί τι τῶν τοιούτων;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: πάνυ γε.

Σωκράτης: ἐννεόηκας οὖν ὅτι τοῦ ἐμβλέποντος εἰς τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν τὸ πρόσωπον ἐμφαίνεται ἐν τῇ τοῦ καταντικρὺ ὄψει ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ, ὃ δὴ καὶ κόρην καλοῦμεν, εἶδωλον ὃν τι τοῦ ἐμβλέποντος;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

Σωκράτης: ὀφθαλμὸς ἄρα ὀφθαλμὸν θεώμενος, καὶ ἐμβλέπων εἰς τοῦτο ὅπερ βέλτιστον αὐτοῦ καὶ ὃ ὀρᾷ, οὕτως ἂν αὐτὸν ἴδοι.

Ἀλκιβιάδης: φαίνεται.

Σωκράτης: εἰ δέ γ’ εἰς ἄλλο τῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου βλέποι ἢ τι τῶν ὄντων, πλὴν εἰς ἐκεῖνο ὃ τοῦτο τυγχάνει ὅμοιον, οὐκ ὄψεται ἑαυτόν.

Ἀλκιβιάδης: ἀληθῆ λέγεις.

Σωκράτης: ὀφθαλμὸς ἄρ’ εἰ μέλλει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν, εἰς ὀφθαλμὸν αὐτῷ βλεπτόν, καὶ τοῦ ὀμματος εἰς ἐκεῖνον τὸν τόπον ἐν ᾧ τυγχάνει ἡ ὀφθαλμοῦ ἀρετὴ ἐγγιγνομένη; ἔστι δὲ τοῦτό που ὅψις;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: οὕτως.

Σωκράτης: ἄρ’ οὖν, ὦ φίλε Ἀλκιβιάδη, καὶ ψυχὴ εἰ μέλλει γινώσκεισθαι αὐτήν, εἰς ψυχὴν αὐτῇ βλεπτόν, καὶ μάλιστα εἰς τοῦτον αὐτῆς τὸν τόπον ἐν ᾧ ἐγγίγνεται ἡ ψυχῆς ἀρετὴ, σοφία, καὶ εἰς ἄλλο ὃ τοῦτο τυγχάνει ὅμοιον ὄν;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες.

Σωκράτης: ἔχομεν οὖν εἰπεῖν ὅτι ἐστὶ τῆς ψυχῆς θειότερον ἢ τοῦτο, περὶ ὃ τὸ εἰδέναι τε καὶ φρονεῖν ἐστίν;

Ἀλκιβιάδης: οὐκ ἔχομεν.

Σωκράτης: τῷ θεῷ ἄρα τοῦτ’ ἔοικεν αὐτῆς, καὶ τις εἰς τοῦτο βλέπων καὶ πᾶν τὸ θεῖον γινούς, θεόν τε καὶ φρόνησιν, οὕτω καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἂν γνοίη μάλιστα.

Ἀλκιβιάδης: φαίνεται.

Socrates: Consider this. If [the Delphic oracle] spoke to our eye, as if to a man, advising, ‘See yourself’, how would we interpret its advice? Surely it means to look into that part of the eye into which, by looking, it would see itself, doesn’t it?

Alcibiades: Clearly.

Socrates: Do we understand what sorts of things we can look into to see both that thing and ourselves simultaneously?

Alcibiades: Obviously, you mean mirrors and such things as that, Socrates.

Socrates: Exactly. And is there not also something similar to those things in the eye with which we see?

Alcibiades: Indeed.

Socrates: Have you taken notice of the fact that the face of the person looking into an eye appears in the pupil of the person directly opposite him, as if in a mirror? We call this part the *korē* because there is some image (*eidōlon*) of the person looking.

Alcibiades: Quite right.

Socrates: Then an eye, beholding another eye and looking into the very part of it that is best and by means of which it sees, would see itself.

Alcibiades: It seems to be the case.

Socrates: And if it should look into another one of the parts of a human being or anything else in reality except that to which this happens to be similar, it will not see itself.

Alcibiades: To be sure.

Socrates: And if an eye is to see itself, mustn't it look into an eye, and specifically into that place of an eye in which the virtue of the eye happens to reside? And isn't that the pupil, as it were?

Alcibiades: Yes.

Socrates: Well then, dear Alcibiades, isn't this also true of the soul, that is, if it intends to know itself, it must look into a soul, and particularly into that part of it in which the virtue of the soul – wisdom – resides, and into any other part to which this happens to be similar?

Alcibiades: It seems so, at least to me, Socrates.

Socrates: Are we able to speak of any part of the soul more divine than that, which is the seat of knowing and thinking?

Alcibiades: We cannot.

Socrates: Then, this part of it is similar to the god, and someone looking into this and coming to know all that is divine – both the god and wisdom – would thus best know himself?

Alcibiades: It seems so.

At first glance, we can already see *in nuce* many themes that will recur in the *Phaedrus* mirroring scene – a scene to which we will return in chapter 3. Socrates presents here a strangely narcissistic model for intersubjective looking, which, together with Diotima's speech in the *Symposium*, led Gregory Vlastos famously to criticize Plato's entire erotic

theory as dismissive of whole and unique individuals in their own subjectivity.¹⁹⁵ That is, Plato's model of "erotic reciprocity" – a phrase David Halperin coined for the erotic encounter one finds in the *Phaedrus* – hides a strangely solipsistic or selfish motivation behind an idealized mode of viewing. Rather than seeing the other person, one sees the most divine part of his or her own soul through this paradoxical soul-catoptric encounter,¹⁹⁶ and thereby, simultaneously theorizes the god and wisdom. Wohl critiques the problematic model this scene presents as follows:

The philosopher-lover gazes into the eyes of his beloved and sees himself as a god. Self-knowledge becomes not only solipsistic but even onanistic. The other becomes irrelevant: his autonomy and alterity, his actual otherness, is elided both as a precondition of this mirroring – for we are told that the eye can only see itself in what is like itself... – and as the goal of this same mirroring, which is, after all, *self*-knowledge. The other disappears in the philosopher's loving self-regard.¹⁹⁷

We will see a similar narcissism in the illumination scene of the *Phaedrus*, where the beloved looks into the eyes of the lover and "does not realize that he is seeing himself as if in a mirror". In fact, as many have recently argued, Ovid's Narcissus seems to be based in some way on the Platonic model from the *Phaedrus*.¹⁹⁸ We could likewise add that, from the perspective of Apuleius, Alcibiades here prefigures a kind of Narcissus figure – a beautiful beloved who constantly rejects the advances of other lovers and eventually falls into a web of his own design; an ironic reading of this scene, such as we could

¹⁹⁵ See Vlastos 1981, 32: "Since persons in their concreteness are thinking, feeling, wishing, hoping, fearing beings, to think of love for them as love for objectifications of excellence is to fail to make the thought of them as *subjects* central to what is felt for them in love". Cf. Nussbaum 1986, 156-99 for an alternative reading. For a trenchant critique of both Vlastos and Nussbaum, see Lawrence 2003.

¹⁹⁶ We may even go so far as to suggest that Apuleius recognized this solipsism involved in Platonic mirroring scenes and re-enacted it in the *Haarspiegel*, which elides the other person altogether by turning her into a mere object of viewing (to be analyzed in chapter 3).

¹⁹⁷ Wohl 2013, 47. However, for an alternative reading of Socrates' erotic model as always embedded in conversation (and therefore, not solipsistic), see Nichols 2007.

¹⁹⁸ See Pellizer 1989; Egan 2004; Bartsch 2006.

expect from a “sophist” of the second century, might suggest that Socrates teaches Alcibiades with the mirror analogy how to become an island unto himself, one consequence of which is his later disastrous political career.¹⁹⁹ To phrase it differently, one purpose of this passage is to educate Alcibiades in the acquisition of self-knowledge, which is held to be one of the quintessential goods in the Platonic framework,²⁰⁰ and thereby to teach Alcibiades virtue. But the didactic mirror in this scene does not promise to teach Alcibiades the kind of external virtue that one might consider socially good; it does not employ the mirror of exemplarity or deterrence to police Alcibiades’ actions or to educate him in socially acceptable behavior. The virtue it promises is the knowledge of the abstract, internal self, entirely divorced from social relations – much like the virtue Socrates possessed of not concerning himself with matters outside of himself. With the new model of selfhood in place, even looking into other people’s eyes – an activity whose eroticism Plato does not even acknowledge²⁰¹ – or into other people’s souls for

¹⁹⁹ Indeed, the *Alcibiades I* in its entirety could be feasibly read, together with the closing of the *Symposium*, as another attempt by Plato to absolve Socrates of any culpability in the failure to educate Alcibiades and in his subsequent terrible political career. The disastrous outcome of this charismatic figure’s involvement in Athenian affairs during the Peloponnesian war was remembered well into the 4th century, as is evidenced by the multiple accusations and apologies of Socrates for his association with him. Beyond the official charge against Socrates of ‘corrupting the youth’, which clearly referred to Alcibiades in particular, we know of others who maintained Socrates’ culpability in the matter even after his execution. For instance, we know of one Polycrates, who wrote an *Accusation of Socrates*, which, in turn, inspired Socrates’ followers to write formal apologies as well as informal accounts of Alcibiades’ life (e.g., Lysias’ *Apology*; the various eponymous *Alcibiades* dialogues written by Aeschines, Antisthenes, Euclides, and Phaedo, etc.). Cf. Denyer 2001, 1: “If anything could be used to substantiate the charge of corrupting the young men, it was Socrates’ association with the most spectacularly corrupted of them all, Alcibiades”. We may also note how Socrates “turns the tables on his accusers” (*ibid.* 226 *ad loc.* 132a1) just before our passage in question when he tells Alcibiades “not to be corrupted by the δημός of the Athenians” (*Alc. I* 132a1: καὶ νῦν γε ἂν μὴ διαφθαρήσῃς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀθηναίων δήμου), using the same language of corruption applied to him in the formal charge. See also Archie 2003, who reads the *Alcibiades I* as a complementary dialogue to Plato’s *Apology* that demonstrates Socrates’ defense in action through dialectic.

²⁰⁰ Cf. *Alc. I* 131b4: εἰ ἄρα σωφροσύνη ἐστὶ τὸ ἐαυτὸν γινώσκειν..., where ἄρα denotes that the “possibility [of this condition] has just been realized” (Denyer 2001, 222 *ad loc.* 131b4).

²⁰¹ See Denyer 2001, 229 *ad loc.* 132c9-133c17: “Glaringly absent is explicit mention of how erotic are looks from, or into, someone’s eyes.”

that matter, does not lead to a real communion between souls or a truly intersubjective encounter; rather, it offers a strange, simultaneous communion with oneself and the divine.

Even in Plato's time, this model of selfhood as a metaphysical soul abstracted from physical reality was rejected out of hand together with the pedagogical mirror, which offers a primarily solipsistic and narcissistic encounter with the self. Xenophon's Socrates in his own *Symposium*, for instance, demonstrates how the mirror of the beloved Socrates inculcates viewers in Socratic virtues, such as ἐγκράτεια.²⁰² In other words, the ἐρώμενος-mirror of transcendent self-knowledge we will find in the *Phaedrus* is appropriated to the realm of socially beneficial pedagogy. One might argue further that Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* puts forward a similar kind of pedagogical function for the Socratic image. But the point in turning to the intersubjective mirroring souls in *Alcibiades I* has been to prepare the ground for the argument that Apuleius' conception of selfhood opens up options beyond Plato's and that the purpose of the mirroring encounter is different. In the Platonic scene, the seeing eye/soul strips away the external reality in order to look beneath and acquire a deeper and more transcendent knowledge of the self.²⁰³ In Apuleius' *laus speculi* of the 'Socratic' and philosophical didactic mirror, we will see him borrowing the Platonic terminology of

²⁰² On this passage and its relationship to *Alcibiades I*, see Wohl 2013; Cf. Goldhill 1998.

²⁰³ In fact, even before the eye/soul mirror discussion, there is a some playful, euphemistic banter between Socrates and Alcibiades about taking their clothes off. See *Alc. I* 132a-b, where Socrates claims that, though Erechtheus is "fair-of-face" (εὐπρόσωπος), "it is necessary to see a man stripped" (ἀλλ' ἀποδύντα χρὴ αὐτὸν θεάσασθαι) before one can assess his character. That is, in the set up to the mirror of the metaphysical self, the dialogue frames the process of seeing as a kind of stripping away of the external veils that obscure reality. In the case of Alcibiades, Socrates is trying to strip away his external self – the self beloved by the people and externally beautiful – and reach behind to the soul. To my point, what is at issue is how to reach beyond one's 'beautiful face' (εὐπρόσωπος), where Plato uses a derivative word of πρόσωπον, the theatrical mask, which is translated into Latin as *persona*.

the acquisition of self-knowledge, but using it in the context of a different conception of selfhood and an alternative mode of didaxis. Whereas in Plato Socrates must undress the object of vision before seeing the internal self (and simultaneously, his own internal self), in Apuleius there is an alternative definition of the self, in which he sees mirror-gazing and philosophical speculation as tools for external transformation.

3. The Didactic Speculum of Apologia 15-16:

We saw in part one of this chapter how many authors of this time period tend to collect mirror tropes from different sources and combine them in interesting and often ill-defined ways. We will see Apuleius doing something similar in blending two separate mirroring traditions in his *laus speculi* – namely, the mirror as a philosophical tool of introspection and what I have labeled the *extraspective speculum* – and offering to his readers a choice between them. That is, similarly to Plutarch and Seneca, he appropriates the ‘Socratic’ didactic mirror tradition but transforms it into a mixture of pleasurable optical illusions and grotesque spectacles that can be categorized in the “ethical deterrence” model of exemplarity. Moreover, just as we saw Plutarch borrowing phrases from the Platonic tradition and reusing them for un-Platonic ends (e.g., female adornment), Apuleius takes phrases and concepts from the Platonic realm of viewing in his representation of the encounter with the mirror, but introduces an alternative model of selfhood and a different pedagogical end point. Representing the activity of mirror-gazing

as a kind of Platonic θεωρία (e.g., with terms such as *inspectio*),²⁰⁴ Apuleius suggests that the *speculum* can offer a deeply philosophical and transcendent experience. But the sublime encounter in front of the mirror only appears to educate the viewer in virtue and self-knowledge. Upon further inspection, we will also find that the philosopher “ought” (*philosophus debet*) to look into the mirror because the mirror reveals interesting delusions, or spectacles that are worth seeing.

Let us begin by looking at the paideutic activity of mirror-gazing that Apuleius recommends to his accuser in the *Apologia*. After waxing poetic about the superiority of the mirror’s *mimesis* over that of the material arts in *Apologia* 14 (to be discussed in chapter 2), Apuleius opens *Apologia* 15 by citing the ‘Socratic’ tradition on the educational benefits of the mirror:

an turpe arbitraris formam suam speculo assiduo explorare? an non Socrates philosophus ultro etiam suasisse fertur discipulis suis, crebro ut semet in speculo contemplarentur, ut qui eorum foret pulchritudine sibi complacitus impendio procuraret, ne dignitatem corporis malis moribus dedecoraret, qui uero minus se commendabilem forma putaret sedulo operam daret, ut uirtutis laude turpitudinem tegeret? adeo uir omnium sapientissimus speculo etiam ad disciplinam morum utebatur.

Do you judge that it is shameful to explore one’s own form in a continual spectacle? Is not Socrates the philosopher said to have actually exhorted his disciples that they contemplate themselves frequently in the mirror, in order that one who was pleasing to himself in beauty might take great care not to disfigure the dignity of his body with evil character, and in order that one who considered himself less commendable in form might continually labor to hide his ugliness with the praise of virtue? In this way, the wisest man of all used a mirror even for the discipline of character.

²⁰⁴ See *OLD* s.v. 3. Cf. Hunink (1997) *ad loc.* 13.8 on the word play of *inspectio* and its more common association with “theoretical examination”. Cf. the discussion of *inspicere* in the introduction.

“Exploring” one’s own form is phrased ironically in the language of theatre and spectacle (*spectaculum*), but even in the word choices of the first line, we can see a problematic construction of internal versus external realities in the *speculum*. *Explorare* is a rather strange verb to use for viewing one’s form, as it is a term more usually applied to investigation of a place²⁰⁵; and in Apuleius it seems most often to refer to a kind of dialectic examination through question and answer or a philosophical investigation. In the former sense, Aemilianus ought to have “explored” Apuleius before taking him to court (*Apol.* 2: *qui si quippiam veri in me explorasset*); and similarly, Milo interrogates Lucius about his place of origin and family through a dialectic “examination” (*Met.* 1.26: *iam et de patria nostra et eius primoribus ac denique de ipso praeside scrupulosissime explorans*: cf. “the scrupulous reader” in *Met.* 9.30: *Lector scrupulosus*). Elsewhere in the *Apologia*, moreover, Apuleius speaks of “exploring books” about natural philosophy (*Apol.* 40: *libros ἀνατομῶν Aristoteli et explorare studio*) – an activity that authorizes his strange investigations of fish. But perhaps most resonant for making sense of this scene, Lucius looks at the back of Photis’ head at the opening of their sexual tryst in 2.8 and wants to “explore her aspect” (*explorassem habitudinem*). In the visual sphere, this “investigation” may be engaging with intromissive or penetrative optical paradigms, as I will suggest in chapter 3, offering a means for the viewer to get inside or penetrate the external *forma*. In *Met.* 2.8-9, in particular, Lucius’ exploration of Photis’ *habitus* strangely leads to a eulogy of her metamorphic, mirror-esque hair, which changes appearance over time and returns a “more pleasing image” (*imaginem gratiorem*) to

²⁰⁵ Consider, e.g., its origin as a military term, used for scoping out a landscape (*OLD* 1; *TLL* I: *speciatim et technice in re militare*).

whoever gazes into it. Moreover, it sets up the eventual terms of the sexual tryst, which allude quite openly to a choice between models of penetration.²⁰⁶

In addition to the philosophical type of viewing we find here, the adjective modifying *spectaculo* – *assiduo* – implies that the object of visualization is “constantly” changing. Coming on the heels of *Apologia* 14, where the mirror is eulogized precisely because it registers change over time (see chapter 2), the “continual” inspection Apuleius implicitly advocates here suggests a perpetual, external transformation. In other words, why would one need a “continual” inspection unless the object being viewed was in constant flux? To top it off, moreover, the thing that is in a process of metamorphosis, one’s *forma*, is compared to a spectacle (*spectaculum*). The word-play in this phrase – i.e., a *speculum* that reveals a perpetual *spectaculum* to the viewer – may be intended to conjure up notions of the educative function of theatre, the very kind of didaxis about which Plato is exceedingly anxious in *Republic* 10; and in this *spectaculum-speculum*, we may also be reminded also of the spectacle of Lucian’s κάτοπτρον of the pantomime dance, which offers both “self-knowledge” to the viewer and an “exemplary” model of how to behave.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Another passage that is of interest here is the opening biography of Plato in Apuleius’ *de Platone* (*de Platone* 1.2), in which Socrates “looks upon” (*aspexit*) the external form of Plato (*habitus*) and divines “his internal character from his external face” (*ingenium...intimum de exteriori conspicatus est facie*). In chapter 4, I will return to this passage and discuss how it plays with superficial and deep modes of viewing.

²⁰⁷ See Lada-Richards 2005, 349-50, who applies the broader category of the paideutic function of the mirror to pantomime: “...pantomime fulfills a function attributed elsewhere to theatre in its entirety, that is to say, it becomes an instructional, corrective mirror, eliciting from the spectating public the twofold response of refraining from wrongdoing all the while embracing righteousness and virtue”. Though Plato’s Socrates does not specifically refer to the mirror of theater, the educative function of the Athenian stage certainly represents one of the avenues through which poetry and the “mirror of poetry” became so influential. His rejection of the mimetic mirror in *Republic* 10 can thus be seen as a rejection of tragedy just as much as it is a refusal to admit Homer into the ideal Republic.

If we review Lucian's *de Saltatione* again for a brief moment, we may get more interpretive purchase on the *spectaculum-speculum* here. Earlier in that dialogue, there is a long discussion of the difference between the masks of tragedy and pantomime: the mask of tragedy reveals the virtue or vice of the character through the external facial expression fixed in its representational form; but the mask of pantomime, which is neutral in its pose, is more fluid in its semiosis, and tends to adapt as a mimetic device to the motions and words of the dancer. As A. K. Petrides has recently shown, a spectator can glean from the external appearance of the tragic mask the virtue or vice of the character who wears it, and this feature of tragedy depends largely on the physiognomic theories of discerning inner character from external characteristic; but Lucian's "mirror of the dance", which uses the more semiotically flexible mask of pantomime, is open to a broader range of interpretations precisely because it changes over time with the movement of the performer.²⁰⁸ And the connection between Apuleius' mirror, by which one "explores his or her own form in a continual spectacle", and Lucian's mirror of the pantomime dance and mask becomes stronger when we consider the fact that this pun on the *spectaculum-speculum*, though initially merely playful, acquires a new meaning in the concluding invective of chapter 16: Aemilianus, as we soon learn, fails to look at his face in a mirror, which looks exactly like the stock character of Thyestes!

Returning to the passage at hand, though "exploring" one's own form is phrased in the language of spectacle, Socrates is nevertheless invoked as the first exemplar in

²⁰⁸ See Petrides 2013. The value of this motive-*mimesis* as evidence for the diachronic mirror, which we will see in the next chapter, should not be overlooked here. We may consider, for instance, the theorization of the ancient mask, discussed in Dupont 2001, 78: "Broadly speaking, in Greek tragedy as in Roman tragedy, text and actors serve to animate timeless masks, that is to say, to integrate them within the transient, linear, irreversible time of a performance; otherwise these masks would retain the fixity of a statue or a corpse." Cf. also Wiles 2007, 237-260 on "sacred viewing" and the mask.

using mirrors for the philosophical endeavor of cultivating virtue. Just as in the instances I noted in my literary history, the ‘Socratic’ model is strangely anti-Platonic, inasmuch as the purpose or goal of philosophical contemplation (*contemplarentur*) in the mirror is either to preserve the *dignitas* of the viewer’s body or to hide (*tegere*)²⁰⁹ its shame (*turpitude*). There is a direct correlation between Socrates’ wisdom (*sapientissimus*) and his use of the mirror as an object for the cultivation of virtue (*ad disciplinam morum*). But the kind of virtue that this inspires does not come from an experience of the Forms or a true vision of beauty; it does not even come from a true dialectic encounter with an ‘other’. Rather, it represents an ironic twist on the Delphic tradition of self-knowledge, which imagines virtue as an internal transformation that mirrors an external reality. In the Apuleian model, the ‘self-knowledge’ one acquires from ‘Socratic’ mirror-gazing concerns knowledge of one’s physical appearance – much as we will see in Ovid’s ironic play on the γνῶθι σεαυτόν tradition in the Narcissus episode²¹⁰ – which then causes the viewer to modify his/her internal “appearance”, or “to adorn the inner man”. Of course, as we saw above, Apuleius is not the first to cite Socrates as the fount of this tradition. However, we should note the strangeness of Apuleius’ particular blend of “theoretical speculation” (*contemplor*) and metamorphosis: this is no Platonic Socrates, who only uses the mirror of dialectic or the κάτοπτρον of erotic mania to acquire knowledge of an inner self – the soul – and to experience a theoretic encounter with the Forms.

²⁰⁹ As Hunink 1997, 62 *ad loc.* points out, there is no need to emend *tegeret* to *tergeret* as Watt 1994, 518 conjectured. One should also note the recurrence of the verb at the end of *Apol.* 16, in a passage that I will argue is another refracted allusion to the Platonic self-knowledge tradition (see below). Moreover, if Diogenes Laertius’ later version of the same story is any indication, the concept shows up there as well, with Socrates using the verb ἐπικαλύπτειν.

²¹⁰ See Bartsch 2006, 86-7, who convincingly argues that Tiresias’ prophecy for Narcissus – “provided that he does not know himself” – represents an ironic twist on the self-knowledge tradition found in the *Phaedrus*. See chapters 2 and 3 for further discussion.

Apuleius then proceeds to explain why a philosopher in particular “should” (*debet*) look into a mirror²¹¹: he ought to consider not only the phenomenon of similarity (*similitudo*) – that great mimetic quality Apuleius praises in *Apologia* 14 – but also the reason (*ratio*) behind the similarity. To conclude chapter 15, he offers an exposition on the science of optics, dropping famous names from moral and natural philosophy to legitimize his argument:

num, ut ait Epicurus, profectae a nobis imagines uelut quaedam exuuiae iugi fluore a corporibus manantes, cum leue aliquid et solidum offenderunt, illisae reflectantur et retro expressae contrauersim respondeant an, ut alii philosophi disputant, radii nostri seu mediis oculis prolinquiati et lumini extrario mixti atque ita uniti, ut Plato arbitratur, seu tantum oculis profecti sine ullo foris amminiculo, ut Archytas putat, seu intentu aeris facti, ut Stoici rentur, cum alicui corpori inciderunt spisso et splendido et leui, paribus angulis quibus inciderant resultent ad faciem suam reduces atque ita, quod extra tangant ac uisunt, id intra speculum imaginentur.

[He ought to consider] whether it is the case that, as Epicurus says, images proceed from us, as if they are a kind of fleece streaming from our bodies in a constant flow; or whether, when they meet with something smooth and solid, they are reflected after striking it and they correspond, transferred back in the opposite direction; or if it is as other philosophers suggest, that rays coming from us are liquified in the middle of our eyes, mixed with external light and thus united, as Plato judges; or whether it is that rays, after departing from our eyes without any outside support, as Archytas thinks, or after being formed from the exertion of air, as the Stoics think, leap back when they (the rays) have fallen on any dense, bright, and smooth object with equal angles of incidence and reflection; and returning back into the viewer’s face, they thus make an image within the mirror of that which they touch and see on the outside.

This tour through intellectual history, though only a partially true representation of the various optical theories on offer in Apuleius’ day, is ostensibly meant to prove why a

²¹¹ *Apol.* 15: quid, quod nec ob haec debet tantummodo philosophus speculum inuisere; nam saepe oportet non modo similitudinem suam, uerum etiam ipsius similitudinis rationem considerare.

philosopher “should” look into a mirror. On first glance, it seems to be because a philosopher likes to understand phenomena, such as how “mirroring” works. However, how does meditation on optics qualify as the *sine qua non* of philosophical activity? If the story about Socrates’ exhortation to students to look in the mirror seems a strange twist for a *Platonicus philosophus* on the γνῶθι σεαυτόν tradition, then in what sense is optical theory a necessary tool in the repertoire of a Platonist? Moreover, the conclusion Apuleius draws for this scene, employing a “self-confident rhetorical question”,²¹² is that a philosopher ought to “track down” (*vestigare*) all things and inquire into and look at all mirrors.²¹³ This word – *vestigare* – becomes nearly synonymous with philosophical activity in the *Apologia*, especially as Apuleius comes to the end of the subsidiary charges; at that point he quotes the myth of the *Phaedrus* to show how the Platonists have “investigated (*vestigare*) loftier things in heaven and stood on the ridge of the world”.²¹⁴ Philosophical “investigation”, therefore, is linked not only to mirror-gazing, but also to undergoing a Platonic ascent of the sort that the soul experiences in the *Phaedrus* myth.²¹⁵ That is to say, a *Platonicus philosophus* ought to look into a mirror because the mirror provides the means to have a transcendent encounter, to ascend the ladder and to

²¹² See Hunink 1997, 64 *ad loc.* 16.1.

²¹³ See *Apol.* 16.1: *uideturne uobis debere philosophia haec omnia uestigare et inquirere et cuncta specula, uel uda uel suda soli, uidere?*

²¹⁴ See *Apol.* 64.12: *ceterum Platonica familia nihil nouimus nisi festum et laetum et sollemne et superum et caeleste. quin altitudinis studio secta ista etiam caelo ipso sublimiora quaequam uestigauit et in extimo mundi tergo stetit. scit me uera dicere Maximus*, qui τὸν ὑπερουράνιον τόπον et οὐρανοῦ νῶτον *legit in Phaedro diligenter*. For the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος in the *Phaedrus*, which Apuleius quotes here, see *Phaedr.* 247b-d. Cf. also *Apol.* 27.7 and 61.6 for more references to philosophical ‘investigation’. Of particular interest as well is *Apol.* 41.24 where Apuleius again quotes Plato as his antecedent in philosophical ‘investigation,’ even in connection with his inspection of fish.

²¹⁵ This is akin to what Fletcher 2014 calls the “catascopic flight” of the soul, which one encounters in the pseudo-Apuleian *de Mundo*. At p. 217, he argues not only that the allusion to the *Phaedran* flight of the soul in *Apologia* 64 simultaneously alludes to opening of *de Mundo*, where the soul scours the earth and the cosmos through philosophical flight, but also that Apuleius connects this all to the “diligent reading” of the judge, Maximus. See below on the connection between reading and mirror-gazing.

traipse upon the ridge of the heavens, so to speak. But how does understanding optics actually accomplish this?

In order to answer this question, it will be useful for us to interrogate the names that appear in Apuleius' list and to trace the possible backdrop for his optical theories. Some scholars have considered the above quotation to be a somewhat accurate depiction of optical theories, citing, e.g., Lucretius (*DRN* 4.26-468) as the source for Epicureanism,²¹⁶ or suggesting Platonic (*Tim.* 45b-46a) or Pythagorean antecedents to this passage.²¹⁷ However, much of the language used to describe each of the theories, though explained as separate and disparate schools of thought on vision, blends optical models in a way reminiscent of the *Phaedrus*, which itself borrows from multiple contradictory theories (e.g., intromission, extromission, etc.) in its tactile description of erotic reciprocity. That is, in a transcendent episode of mirroring at the climax of Plato's sublime myth in the *Phaedrus* (*Phaedr.* 255c1ff.), the kinetics of erotic desire are mapped onto the optical theories available to Plato. Borrowing from Empedoclean flux theory to describe desire and erotic mania,²¹⁸ Plato depicts beauty as a physical substance that flows (τὸ τοῦ κάλλους ῥεῦμα) from the body of the beloved; after filling the lover up with beauty, it bounces off of him "just as a wind or an echo leaping back from smooth and solid surfaces is carried back from where it came" (καὶ οἷον πνεῦμα ἢ τις ἡχώ ἀπὸ

²¹⁶ See Hunink (1997) 64 *ad loc.* 'Epicurus': "in the Epicurean theory, all objects constantly emit *eidola* (*simulacra*), which are perceived by the senses...this Epicurean notion is well known from the poem of Lucretius...and Apuleius may well have been inspired by this poet rather than by Epicurus himself...the terminology used here seems to point in this direction too, especially the stately expression *illisae - respondeant*, which recalls Lucretius' language". However, Hunink is wrong to suggest this about *illisae*, as the term does not occur in Lucretius in the context of mirroring, but rather in the context of erotic love and the interaction that happens between two lovers (see *DRN* 4.1080).

²¹⁷ See, e.g., Bingenheimer 1993, 159 n. 94, in which he explains Apuleius' theory about the invisibility of Daemons by reference to Apuleius' discussion of optics in the *Apologia*.

²¹⁸ See Yunis 2011, 152-3 *ad loc.* 251b2.

λείων τε καὶ στερεῶν ἀλλομένη πάλιν ὅθεν ὠρμήθη φέρεται); at this point, it flows back into the beautiful beloved “through the eyes” (πάλιν...διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν). It is at that moment that the beloved unwittingly acquires self-knowledge and feels a reciprocal kind of desire, which Socrates calls an εἶδωλον.

Returning to the discussion of optics from the *Apologia*, not only are *images* conceived of as physical and tactile entites (*quaedam exuviae*) paradoxically “flowing from our bodies in a constant stream” (*iugi fluore a corporibus manantes*) – in a manner similar to the *Phaedran* model of desire (cf. ῥεῦμα; ἀπορροή) – but they are also said to be reflected (*reflectantur*) and translated in the opposite direction (*retro expressae contraversim respondeant*) precisely when they hit (*offenderunt*) something “smooth and solid” (*leue aliquid et solidum*). In a similar fashion to the Platonic antecedent, the light involved in mirroring mixes images of water and wind – such as the echo – and how they interact with “smooth and solid” surfaces: compare *leue...et solidum* with λείων τε καὶ στερεῶν. We could even see in the excessive repetition of reciprocity (*reflectantur ...retro...contraversim respondeant*) a translation of Plato’s πνεῦμα which travels back (πάλιν) just as the specular reciprocity of the flow of beauty returns (πάλιν) to the beautiful one. Even Plato’s image of beauty “bouncing back” (ἀλλομένη πάλιν) like wind is retained here in the word *resultent*, while the phrase πάλιν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν – a phrase that was of great importance in Second Sophistic Platonizing literature, as we will see in chapter 3 – may be translated by the line *ad faciem suam reduces*.

This deep engagement with the *Phaedrus*, which has generally gone unnoticed in the scholarship on this passage,²¹⁹ both implicitly suggests the connection between the mirror and self-knowledge and subtly sets up the concluding protreptic of the coming invective in chapter 16. If we, therefore, ask again why a philosopher should look into a mirror, the answer seems to be clear at this point. It is not merely the superficial and facile notion that the ‘Socrates’ of the didactic mirror-tradition is purported to have advocated, namely that the mirror exhorts beautiful and ugly people to virtue for some kind of inner transformation that corresponds to the outer; nor is it the apparent non-sequitur that ‘philosophers’ care about physical and natural phenomena, such as optics. Philosophers ought to care about mirroring and theoretical speculation because it can lead to a Platonic kind of self-knowledge and investigation (*vestigare*) of the upper realm. That is, the erotic reciprocity of catoptrics is one of the choices on offer through mirror speculation.

On the other side, however, Apuleius provides the alternative choice by expanding his discussion of optics to account for all types of mirrors, even those which are apparently deceptive, such as convex or concave mirrors – the optical illusions that Socrates is anxious about in the *Republic*. In fact, in Apuleius’ explanation, a comparison of different types of mirrors enables the viewer to develop reasons as to why flat mirrors reflect “equal gazes and images” (*pares optutus et imagines*), or why in convex or concave mirrors, objects seem smaller or larger. Further mirror speculation enables a philosopher to distinguish when and why the left hand changes (*permutentur*) with the

²¹⁹ McCreight 1991, 466 is the exception, who notes that the *hapax legomenon*, *proliquati*, could be Apuleius’ attempt to translate the Platonic word ἀπορρόη.

right or why an *imago* at one time hides (*tum recondat*) in the same mirror and at another time comes out (*tum exerat*). The play with categories of transformation juxtaposes internal and external realities, and even in the mirror, an *imago* can hide or come out. Thus, while optics have the potential to show a viewer one path to a philosophical enlightenment, an alternative model of looking into mirrors – such as one finds, e.g., in Seneca’s Hostius Quadra, whose self-knowledge is another distorted version of the Platonic γνῶθι σεαυτόν tradition²²⁰ – can offer to the viewer a series of pleasurable deceptions. But even this model of looking at illusions has its philosophical exemplars, such as Archimedes who was “most memorable” (*memorandus*) because he frequently and diligently “looked into” a mirror (*inspexerat*). In other words, the very features of mirroring that Plato is anxious about in the *Republic* – i.e., optical illusions due to refraction – are other elements of philosophical learning for Apuleius. For the philosopher who knows how to look and see – that is, for the one who “look[s] diligently and often into the mirror” (*quod inspexerat speculum saepe ac diligerter*) – even mutations or distorting features of reality can have a didactic function.²²¹

In *Apologia* 16, Apuleius concludes the *laus speculi* with a piece of invective against his accuser. He turns to Aemilianus and says:

quem tu librum, Aemiliane, si nosses ac non modo campo et glebis, uerum etiam abaco et puluisculo te dedisses, mihi istud crede, quanquam teterrimum os tuum

²²⁰ See again Bartsch 2006.

²²¹ We may compare this idea to Lucretius’ exposition of optical illusions in book 4 of *DRN*. A particularly illustrative example occurs at 4.414-19, where the narrator explains an illusory phenomenon of staring into a puddle no more than a finger’s depth, but one in which “you seem to look down at clouds and see the sky and bodies hidden marvelously in a sky under the earth” (*nubila despicere et caelum ut videre videre/ corpora mirande sub terras abdita caelo*). Here, just as in Apuleius, the philosopher who has been initiated into Epicureanism – i.e., the reader who has learned from Lucretius – is able to dispel the confusion engendered by this deceptive natural phenomenon.

minimum a Thyesta tragico demutet, tamen profecto discendi cupidine speculum inuiseres et aliquando relicto aratro mirarere tot in facie tua sulcos rugarum.

And if you had come to know this book (i.e., Archimedes' book on mirrors), Aemilianus, and if you had given yourself over not only to the field and clods, but also to the abacus and chalk, believe me about this, even though your utterly grotesque face differs minimally from the tragic Thyestes, you would nonetheless be looking into a mirror out of a desire for learning and sometimes, leaving the plow aside, you would be marveling at the very many furrows of wrinkles on your face.

This dense passage, combining a number of philosophical traditions into an invective masterpiece, should be considered as a blending of three separate tropes. In the first trope, Apuleius highlights his own literary expertise by arguing that Aemilianus would have made different life choices if he had read certain books. As is fitting to the genre of an *Apology*, moreover, Apuleius' suggestion that Aemilianus ought to have approached his high-stakes choice differently reminds the reader/audience that they, too, have a choice between Apuleius' and Aemilianus' models of living. The way in which Apuleius makes the leap from looking at various types of mirrors to Aemilianus' ignorance of books appears somewhat disconnected at a superficial glance, but if we think back to the *extraspective* mirror-text, the gap seems to shrink. Because of a failure to read, Aemilianus has never truly contemplated life choices and has never compared his own choices with the exemplary, *triangulative* mirror of a character or narrator. Had he spent time reading, on the other hand, he would have chosen to mirror-gaze and he might have chosen to do so in the correct manner.

In the next movement, which brings the reader back to the *spectaculum-speculum* word play at the beginning of chapter 15, Apuleius claims that Aemilianus would have received a kind of self-knowledge through mirror speculation – at least insofar as he

would have realized how little his face (*os*) differs (*demuto*) from the tragic Thyestes in its appearance. If the former metamorphic capacity of the mirror and its ability to transform visual reality with optical effects is emphasized in the appeal to the ‘Socratic’ didactic *speculum* and the tour of optical theory, the transformation that happens here is a lack of change, or a lack of differentiation (*demuto*) between the real viewer and a representational type.²²² The mirror image is once again framed as a theatrical display, which, in line with Lucian’s mirror of dance, could have didactic value according to ancient theories of *mimesis*²²³: for an audience member witnessing a performance of the *Thyestes*, the tragic figure could inspire self-reflection and teach a viewer “what to choose and what to flee” (cf. Lucian *de Salt.* 81: ἃ τε χρῆ αἰρεῖσθαι καὶ ἃ φεύγειν μεμαθηκότες). Essential to my point, moreover, the mask, or the *imago* of theater and pantomime, was always viewed as a kind of metamorphosis, not only of characters who transform over the course of the play,²²⁴ but also of the dancer whose pantomime mask changes in its affective influence on viewers depending on the movements and words of

²²² Apuleius is apparently the only ancient author to use the verb *demuto* in this particular type of construction, in which a real thing “differs from” a *mimesis* or vice versa. The intransitive usage of the verb is borrowed from Plautus (see *TLL*.2; cf. Lee 2005, 154 on *Flor.* 16.30 *ad. loc.*); however, the four intransitive usages cited in Plautus all still refer to some kind of change or transformation, whether it be changing one’s mind (*Ps.* 555 & 566), changing a date of payment (*Vid.* 91), or transforming one’s character (*Mil. Glor.* 1130, where Palaestrio questions whether the ‘adulterous soldier has changed his ways’). The closest we get in Plautus to the ‘difference’ between a *mimesis* and an original is in a line where two characters have a dance off and the first one to ‘slip up’ (*demuto*) loses (*Stich.* 725). On the other similar usage in Apuleius, see *Florida* 16.30, where Apuleius promises that a written version of a speech ‘will differ very little’ (*paululum demutabit*) from the original. Cf. Lee 2005, 154 on *Flor.* 16.30 *ad loc.*, who explains in particular some of the textual problems in this passage.

²²³ See Lada-Richard 2005 for discussion of the didactic value of *mimesis* in Lucian; for didactic *mimesis* more generally, see Halliwell 2002.

²²⁴ See, e.g., Wiles 1991, 129-49 for discussion of the metamorphic nature of Plautine masks.

the dancer or actor.²²⁵ That is, the mask is not only a theatrical device that an actor can don or take off to adopt recognizable *personae*, but can also represent a selfhood in flux and subject to change both for the actor who wears it and the viewer who sees it.²²⁶

There is an irony, however, in Apuleius' hypothetical situation hidden in the fact that Aemilianus' self-knowledge, acquired through seeing his own face in the mirror, provides a recognition that his face is like a mask from theater. No doubt, in the framework of the *extraspective* mirror, one could argue that there is a similarity between a mask and a mirror in as much as both represent an exemplar of some sort – either a paradigm presented for a viewer to follow or a negative *exemplum* for avoidance.²²⁷ As we will see shortly, though, Apuleius is also clearly blending in the terms of Platonic self-knowledge, in which mirror speculation allows a vision of an internal, metaphysical soul. However, Aemilianus would not see his true character or soul, and in fact, he would not even see his own face. Rather, he would only see how his face is a type known from myth and spectacle – a type which ironically represents excessive consumption and delusion. Thus, in this cleverly constructed invective, Aemilianus becomes the wrong kind of viewer, which, in turn, provides a moral lesson from mythology. It is not his grotesque face that is the problem; rather, it is the fact that, given the chance to see his grotesque face, Apuleius implies, he would not have followed the Socratic dictum to mirror-gaze for the purpose of compensating for *turpitude corporis*.

²²⁵ See Petrides 2013 on the semiotic variability of the pantomime mask.

²²⁶ See Wiles 2007, 263 on selfhood as a series of shifting *personae* in Roman culture. Cf. Cicero *de Oratore* 2.221-2 for a description of the process of adopting new *personae* (quoted in Wiles). Cf. also Wiles 1991 on the metamorphic mask of the stage.

²²⁷ We may compare this once again with the passage quoted above from Cicero's *Pro Archia*, which, as Bartsch 2006, 126 has shown, plays with the double meaning of *imago* as ancestor mask and as reflection in the mirror: "The term *imago*, like the mirror itself...provided a link between reflection and prescription, and came to be associated with a certain instructive potential."

The third trope this invective taps into is a philosophical tradition of marvel. What, one may ask, is Aemilianus' internal response in this thought experiment? Even though his face does not differ from the grotesque, stock theatrical character, the spectacle viewed in the mirror would not provide self-knowledge – at least, not the kind of soul-knowledge we saw Plato's Socrates advocating in *Alcibiades I*; nor would it effect a transformation toward virtue. Rather, reading Archimedes' book would cause Aemilianus to gaze into a mirror “out of a desire for learning” (*discendi cupidine*) and to “marvel” (*mirarere*) at the spectacular sight. Apuleius deftly passes over the question of precisely what Aemilianus would desire to learn in the mirror by skipping directly to his internal reaction. Although the whirlwind tour through optical theory is an impressive display of Apuleius' philosophical knowledge, Aemilianus' mirror inspection does not seem to correspond to the ‘Socratic’ didactic tradition Apuleius cited in chapter 15. In other words, while Aemilianus falls into the category of the grotesquely ugly and would be expected to learn virtuous behavior through his encounter with such a spectacle, he would not be exhorted to virtue in Apuleius' thought-experiment because, in reality, he turns out to *be* the stock character who offers “ethical therapy by deterrence” (see Zadorojnyi 2010, quoted on p. 62 above), and he cannot take the mask off. In a subtle blending of the Platonic self-knowledge and ‘Socratic’ didactic *speculum* traditions, Apuleius implies that the external *is* the internal, or in other words, Aemilianus' self *is* his face. The external mask of Thyestes that his face resembles mirrors the internal man, thus characterizing him as a Thyestes type at the same time as dresses him up with the mask.²²⁸ As a consequence, marvel or stupefaction rather than a call to virtue comprises

²²⁸ Cf. Hunink 1997, 66 *ad loc.* says of the association: “the ugly mask of the horrified Thyestes is a

the affective response that Aemilianus would undergo. There is much to be said on the use of the verb *miror* here and its connection to philosophical “wonder” or “amazement”, and I will need to digress shortly into the philosophical tradition of marveling at sights and spectacles, which lead to philosophic enlightenment. But first, we must look at the closing words of the *laus speculi*, which represent the most fantastic twist on the Platonic self-knowledge tradition associated with the mirror.

Apuleius finishes the invective portion at the end of chapter 16 by railing against Aemilianus’ *mores*, which are even worse than his disgusting face. At *Apol.* 16, he says:

At ego non mirer, si boni consulis me de isto distortissimo uultu tuo dicere, de moribus tuis multo truculentioribus reticere.

But I would not marvel if you consider it a good thing that I speak about that most distorted face of yours, but remain silent about your character, which is much worse.

On first glance, the implication seems to be that Aemilianus’ *mores* are so much worse because he has not looked in the mirror and attempted to compensate for his disgusting face with virtuous behavior. We may note that Apuleius, in speaking of Aemilianus’ physical appearance rather than his *mores*, is showing him precisely what an actual mirror would reveal: one could say that, in the conception of the *speculum* as a partner in dialectic (cf. Bartsch quoted on p. 62-3 above), the mirror only tells us about our *vultus* but “remains silent” (*reticere*) about our *mores*. If we think back to the ‘Socratic’ didactic tradition, the kind of self-knowledge that *speculum* offers is, of course, supposed to inspire the viewer to adorn him- or herself with beautiful virtue. That mirror speaks not only about external realities, but tells the viewer about his or her *mores*, or more

theatrical element with clearly negative associations; it is firmly put on Aemilianus’ face. ...By contrast, in 13.7 Apuleius had dissociated himself with various forms of theatrical equipment”.

prescriptively, what his or her *mores* ought to be. The paideutic *speculum* thus demonstrates via exemplarity what one should aim for and in that sense, provides the viewer with a kind of self-knowledge. Apuleius' *speculum*, despite his protestations, does not promise to function in an exemplary way, or to offer the same type of self-knowledge and exhortation toward virtue. In fact, as Apuleius continues this invective, he subtly and comically invokes a perverted version of the Delphic maxim so frequently cited by Plato's Socrates, much as Lucian's Lycinus did. He explains that it is because of Aemilianus' obscurity – his pursuit of farming and rustic activities, his lack of study and public persona – that he has not investigated himself and arrived at the kind of self-knowledge one would acquire through mirror speculation. But precisely because Apuleius is famous for his public persona as an intellectual, which he acquired through philosophical activities such as looking into the mirror, he is open to criticism from Aemilianus:

ita et tibi umbra ignobilitatis a probatore obstitit, et ego numquam studui male facta cuiusquam cognoscere, sed semper potius duxi mea peccata tegere quam aliena indagare.

In this way, while the shadow of obscurity has shielded your character from scrutiny, I have never been zealous to learn about the misdeeds of anyone else, but I have always worked to conceal my own faults rather than investigate the faults belonging to others.

One may see here an adaptation and interpretation of the Platonic Socrates' invocation of the Delphic maxim. Not only has Aemilianus failed to acquire self-knowledge in the mirror, but it also has been impossible for others to know his character because of the shadow of ignobility. Apuleius, on the other hand, prefers not to learn (*cognoscere*) the misdeeds of others, but rather to hide his own faults. The self-knowledge he acquires

through his studies and his contemplation vis-à-vis the mirror does not, however, inspire him to adorn the inner man with virtue. Rather, as in Apuleius' version of the 'Socratic' *speculum*, where the ugly learn how to hide (*tegere*) their *turpitude* with beautiful virtue, self-knowledge only enables Apuleius to better conceal his own ugly faults. It is worth noting the parody of Apuleius employing exactly the converse argument from Socrates in Plato's *Apology* (*Apol.* 20c6-23c1). There, when famously seeking out (ζητησις)²²⁹ the meaning of the Delphic oracle's statement that he is the wisest man of all, Socrates concludes that those people least believed to be wise in the eyes of the general public are often the wisest whereas those who have a reputation for wisdom very often turn out to be fools. In contrast, Apuleius argues in his invective that public opinion about Aemilianus – or rather, the lack of public opinion, since no one knows who he is – neatly corresponds to his lack of wisdom. Moreover, if we think of the larger self-knowledge tradition in Platonic discourse, Apuleius' claim to "hide his own faults rather than track down the faults of others" appears to be a very strange appropriation indeed. In the *Phaedrus*, for instance, Socrates curiously refuses to give a rationalization of mythology on the grounds that he has not yet fulfilled the Delphic maxim to know himself. At 229e6, he says:

οὐ δύναμαί πω κατὰ τὸ Δελφικὸν γράμμα γινῶναι ἑμαυτόν· γελοῖον δὴ μοι φαίνεται τοῦτο ἔτι ἀγνοοῦντα τὰ ἀλλότρια σκοπεῖν.

I am not yet able to know myself in accordance with the Delphic maxim; it would indeed seem laughable to inspect the matters of others while I am still ignorant of this fact.

²²⁹ We may note that the verbal parallel between Plato's *Apology* and Apuleius' is resonant as well. *indagare* is glossed in the *TLL* as ἐκζητέω (see *TLL*.GLOSS).

In a similar fashion to Apuleius, there is a piece of knowledge that Socrates has failed to recognize (γινώσκειν, to which *cognoscere* is cognate), and as a consequence he prefers not to investigate (σκοπεῖν; cf. *indagare*) the matters of others (ἁλλότρια, for which *aliena* would be the Latin translation).²³⁰ The Delphic maxim and the injunction to “know oneself”, moreover, went hand in hand with the mirror tradition in Platonic dialogues²³¹; thus, we saw above in *Alcibiades I* how Socrates explores the Delphic maxim with regard to one coming to know (γινώσκειν) one’s own soul; and we will return to this motif in chapter 3, when we analyze how Apuleius’ *Haarspiegel* plays off this tradition. Here, too, we may see Apuleius working within this Platonic self-knowledge-mirroring tradition, particularly in the way that he claims not to “track down the [vices] of others” and only to concern himself with his own faults. But Apuleius’ mock-Delphic dictum here in the *Apologia* once again manipulates the Platonic self-knowledge tradition into a readerly choice. Beyond the Platonic mirror, there are social benefits of philosophical education – in this case, the ability to conceal one’s faults from the eyes of others – which Apuleius highlights in order to criticize the failed life choices of his accuser. In that regard, the question is similar to the life-choice posed to Alcibiades, whose concern for external appearances and social advantage makes him incapable of learning from the mirroring soul of his lover.²³²

²³⁰ See *TLL.GLOSS* for *alienus*, which gives ἁλλότριος as the Greek word which *alienus* translates.

²³¹ Bartsch 2006, 41-56.

²³² See, e.g., Denyer 2001, 233 *ad loc.* 133a7: “...hence when an eye sees itself by seeing its reflection in a pupil, it is seeing itself by seeing how another eye sees it. This has two consequences. First, the analogy with an eye that sees itself will make self-knowledge particularly attractive to one with Alcibiades’ concern for the impression that he makes upon others (cf. 124a5-6n). Second, the analogy will mean that self-knowledge is gained, not by any inward-looking self-absorption, but by casting the mind outward, to appreciate what others know about oneself”.

We have seen so far how Apuleius manipulates the optical and the self-knowledge traditions of the mirror, borrowing terminology and concepts especially from the *Phaedrus* but twisting the thrust or the meaning of the original metaphors. If we return to the internal reaction that Apuleius claims Aemilianus would undergo at the mirror's instigation, we find one final ambivalent borrowing from the philosophical tradition, one that will become of paramount importance for our reading of the *Metamorphoses*. Apuleius suggests, we may recall, that Aemilianus would have looked into the mirror (*invisere*) just as Archimedes looked (*inspicere*)²³³ and would have marveled (*mirari*) at his own grotesqueness, if only he had read Archimedes' book. When we consider the Prologue of the *Metamorphoses* in chapter 4, we will see that these two actions – or rather, action (looking) and *re*-action (wonder) – are precisely what the narrator exhorts us to do in our engagement with that text. While these words are frequently used in Latin literature, they are also deeply embedded in the philosophical tradition, beginning with Plato and his own appropriation of the language of the Eleusinian mysteries and theoretic encounters in his programmatic, philosophical statements.

As Andrea Nightingale has argued, an often-overlooked feature of the theoretic encounter in Plato's application of the language of mystery cult is its connection to philosophical "wonder" or "amazement".²³⁴ She points out that there are two types of "wonder" in Platonic theoretic experience: (1) the "wonder" or "amazement" inspired by looking upon the Forms, particularly the Form of beauty, and (2) "wonder" as a sense of

²³³ Apuleius seems to use the words *inspicere* and *invisere* interchangeably here, as is noted also in the *TLL* entry on *inviso*. See *TLL* B.3, where *invisere* is *i. q. introspicere*, but the two canonical citations come from the *Apologia*, where, the entry notes, he also uses *inspicere* for mirror-gazing.

²³⁴ See Nightingale 2004, 253-268. In particular, see 253: "Wonder plays an essential role in the pursuit and practice of *θεωρία*, yet it is rarely analyzed in the scholarly literature."

perplexity that inspires philosophical investigation and leads to a demystification of the object of wonder. In the vein of (1), there is a playful account of transcendent “wonder” in the section of the *Symposium* that immediately precedes Diotima’s description of the vision of the Form of beauty²³⁵; and similarly, Alcibiades’ encomium of Socrates at the end of the *Symposium* is inspired by marvel at Socrates’ appearance and words. In the *Republic*, too, the philosopher “wonders” at the Forms and tries to imitate them, after “beholding” (ὁρῶντας καὶ θεωμένους) them.²³⁶ We will see in chapter 3, as well, that being “dumbstruck” (ἐκπλήττονται) and literally “outside of one’s self” (οὐκέτ’ ἐν αὐτῶν γίνονται) comprises the affective reaction of the ἐραστής of the *Phaedrus*²³⁷; and the viewer’s encounter with beauty is inherited by the rhetorical and poetic tradition of *ekphrasis*, as evidenced most notably in Aeneas’ encounter with himself in the reliefs of Dido’s temple to Juno²³⁸ or in Narcissus’ ‘quasi-ekphrastic’ gazing into the mirror, in which he is ‘dumbstruck’ (*Met.* 3.418: *adstupet*).²³⁹ This response is not at all divergent from the one we will see Lucius having at the prospect of seeing sorceresses and goddesses undress; and we will find Psyche, too, ironically having a kind of out-of-body

²³⁵ See *Symp.* 205a-b; 207c-d; 208b-c. And after the philosopher sees the Form of beauty, Diotima calls it a “wonderous vision” (see 210e): ὃς γὰρ ἂν μέχρι ἐνταῦθα πρὸς τὰ ἐρωτικά παιδαγωγῇ, θεώμενος ἐφεξῆς τε καὶ ὁρθῶς τὰ καλά, πρὸς τέλος ἤδη ἰὼν τῶν ἐρωτικῶν ἐξαίφνης κατόψεται τι θαυμαστὸν τὴν φύσιν καλόν, τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὃ Σώκρατες, οὗ δὴ ἔνεκεν καὶ οἱ ἔμπροσθεν πάντες πόνοι ἦσαν...

²³⁶ *Rep.* 6.500c-d.

²³⁷ *Phaedr.* 250a4.

²³⁸ *Aen.* 1.494-6: Haec dum Dardanio Aeneae miranda uidentur/ dum stupet obtutuque haeret defixus in uno/ regina ad templum, forma pulcherrima Dido... Importantly, in this scene, “things worthy of wonder” (*miranda*) are seen and Aeneas’ response is stupefaction.

²³⁹ Of interest is perhaps the intersection between aesthetic and erotic responses to beauty. See, e.g., Hardie 2002, 185 on the stupefaction (*stupor*) inspired by beautiful art and beautiful women, and the slippage between the internal responses to the two separate sights: “The line between the two kinds of amazement, at a work of art and at a supremely beautiful human being, is one that is difficult to draw within the reactions of both Aeneas and Perseus to the objects that hold their gaze. But the attempt to discriminate is misguided, given the routine interference in ancient writing on art between aesthetic and erotic responses”.

experience because of marvel.²⁴⁰ Thus, it seems quite possible that Apuleius picks up on the philosophical and literary trope that connects viewing with marvel and employs it here in his invective against Aemilianus to humorous effect. Of course, Aemilianus would not marvel at his encounter with the Form of beauty, but more accurately, with the Form of grotesqueness. His ugliness comically has the same effect that the beauty of the ἐρώμενος has on the ideal, philosophical viewer – stupefaction.

However, the connection between “viewing” and “wonder” is only one piece of the comedy. The other piece comes in the phrase *discendi cupidine*, which Apuleius uses rather vaguely and which depends on the connection between “wonder” and philosophy – the second type of wonder Nightingale describes in Platonic experience. Not only do some dialogues open with a playful reference to wonder as a meta-literary beginning to the dialogue²⁴¹ – “wonder” being the starting point of philosophy – but in the *Theaetetus*, Socrates specifically addresses the relationship between “wonder” and philosophy. At 155c5, Theaetetus exclaims that he is lost in “wonder” at the argument, and Socrates replies:

Θεόδωρος γάρ, ὃ φίλε, φαίνεται οὐ κακῶς τοπάζειν περὶ τῆς φύσεώς σου. μάλα γὰρ φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη...

²⁴⁰ Graverini 2010 convincingly argues that marvel in the *Cupid and Psyche* episode is inherited from this scene in the *Phaedrus*, where the lover looks upon beauty and is ‘no longer in himself,’

²⁴¹ As representative, see, e.g., *Alcibiades I* 103a1 ff.: ὃ παῖ Κλεινίου, οἷμαί σε θαυμάζειν ὅτι πρῶτος ἐραστῆς σου γενόμενος τῶν ἄλλων πεπαυμένων μόνος οὐκ ἀπαλλάττομαι, καὶ ὅτι οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι δι’ ὅχλου ἐγένοντό σοι διαλεγόμενοι, ἐγὼ δὲ τοσούτων ἐτῶν οὐδὲ προσεῖπον... It is worthwhile to note here the connection between ‘marveling,’ the lover, and dialectic, particularly in a dialogue concerned with the mirror of the lover/interlocutor as a means to self knowledge.

Then Theodorus seems to have guessed well about your nature my friend. For this experience, namely marveling, is characteristic of the philosopher: in fact, there is no other beginning of philosophy than this...²⁴²

“Wonder” is strangely framed as a natural quality (περὶ τῆς φύσεώς σου), and it comprises the beginning of philosophy. In Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, too, “wonder” constitutes the beginning of ἀπορία, and these two affective experiences together provide the foundational components of philosophy. At *Metaphysics* 982b, he says:

διὰ γὰρ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν τὰ πρόχειρα τῶν ἀτόπων θαυμάσαντες, εἶτα κατὰ μικρὸν οὕτω προϊόντες καὶ περὶ τῶν μειζόνων διαπορήσαντες, οἷον περὶ τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως. ὁ δ’ ἀπορῶν καὶ θαυμάζων οἶται ἀγνοεῖν (διὸ καὶ ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφος πῶς ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μῦθος σύγκειται ἐκ θαυμασίων): ὥστ’ εἴπερ διὰ τὸ φεύγειν τὴν ἄνοιαν ἐφιλοσόφησαν, φανερὸν ὅτι διὰ τὸ εἰδέναι τὸ ἐπίστασθαι ἐδίωκον καὶ οὐ χρήσεώς τινος ἔνεκεν.

It is on account of wondering that men began to philosophize both now and at first; wondering from the beginning at obviously strange things, and then progressing little by little and raising issues of greater importance, such as questions about the changes of the moon and of the sun, about the stars and about the generation of everything. Now the man who feels at a loss and experiences wonder thinks that he does not know (wherefore the lover of myth is in a sense a philosopher, for myth is composed out of wonders); thus if they philosophized for the sake of escaping ignorance, it is evident that they pursued knowledge for its own sake, and not for some utility.

We may again note the importance of ἀπορία in the Platonic metaphor of the theoretic journey of the philosopher, which Aristotle here seems to borrow from Plato. Wonder and confusion at the natural world – or for that matter, at mythology – make up the

²⁴² For further references on the importance of philosophical “wonder” in the dialogues, see Denyer 2001, 83 *ad loc.* *Alcibiades I* 103a1. Cf. Murray 1996, 183 *ad loc.* *Rep.* 398a4 for references to the unhealthy or deceptive kind of wonder in Platonic viewing experience, such as we see in the “wondrous sophist” in *Republic* 10 who holds up the mirror and creates the whole world.

necessary attitudes or states of mind that lead to true learning. In fact, there is a particularly resonant passage for our study of Apuleius' invective in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; in a passage where Aristotle explains how pleasure is a movement of the soul and how it is created (1.11.21ff. (1370a21ff.)), he says:

καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν ἡδὺν ὥς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ: ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ θαυμάζειν τὸ ἐπιθυμεῖν μαθεῖν ἐστίν, ὥστε τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἐπιθυμητόν, ἐν δὲ τῷ μανθάνειν τὸ εἰς τὸ κατὰ φύσιν καθίστασθαι...ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ μανθάνειν τε ἡδὺν καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν, καὶ τὰ τοιαύδε ἀνάγκη ἡδέα εἶναι, οἷον τό τε μιμούμενον, ὥσπερ γραφικὴ καὶ ἀνδριαντοποιία καὶ ποιητικὴ, καὶ πᾶν ὃ ἂν εὖ μεμιμημένον ᾖ, κἂν ᾗ μὴ ἡδὺν αὐτὸ τὸ μεμιμημένον: οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τούτῳ χαίρει, ἀλλὰ συλλογισμὸς ἔστιν ὅτι τοῦτο ἐκεῖνο, ὥστε μανθάνειν τι συμβαίνει.

Both learning and wondering are pleasant for the most part: for in wondering, there is a desire to learn, with the result that the marvelous thing is desirable; and in learning, there is an establishing of that which happens according to nature...And since learning and wondering are pleasant, all things connected with them are necessarily also pleasant; such as in the imitation of something, as in painting, sculpture, poetry, and everything which is imitated well, even if the very thing being imitated is not pleasant. For it is not because of this that there is pleasure; but it is through reasoning that *this* is *that* such that we learn something.

As Froma Zeitlin has shown, this Aristotelian connection between wonder, pleasure, learning, and imitation is already picked up in works of Apuleius' contemporaries, for instance, in the prologue of Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*.²⁴³ But whereas in Longus the allusion to philosophical wonder is a programmatic statement about two levels of imitation – both a competitive *mimesis* of nature and an imitation of earlier, authoritative literary models – Apuleius' conflation of these tropes takes place in an invective railing against an unphilosophical opponent who lacks wonder. If Aemilianus had even an iota of wonder, he would have conceived of a desire for learning in an Aristotelian sense, and he would have recognized the correspondence between his face and the Thyestes

²⁴³ See Zeitlin 1990, 436-44. Cf. also Graverini 2010 on philosophical wonder in Longus and Antonius Diogenes.

representational-type. But Apuleius is not interested here in educating Aemilianus, or in inspiring the kind of awe that leads to knowledge. This is not a Platonic dialogue, but an invective, in which one party has not even reached the first stage of philosophy, but the other party, Apuleius, naturally possessed the wonder that led him to philosophical inquiry and has moved far beyond the state of perplexity and on to philosophical pursuits. Recall how Apuleius transitions to the final stage of invective: *At ego non mirer*.²⁴⁴ Moreover, the wonder at external reality and the act of comparing a *mimesis* with an object are ultimately associated in Plato and Aristotle with a kind of transformation, or rather, a conversion to philosophy. In the case of Plato, “wonder” is the beginning of a journey narrative; in Aristotle, mystification leads to a “fleeing from ignorance” (τὸ φεύγειν τὴν ἄγνοιαν), much like the exemplary mirrors of drama and dance provide a ethical deterrence (cf. again *de Salt.*: ἃ φεύγειν).

In this somewhat absurd defense of owning a mirror, Apuleius continually oscillates between two poles, between speaking about and doing actual Platonic philosophy and merely using it as a rhetorical sleight of hand. He employs deeply philosophical (and Platonic) concepts and language in his advocacy of mirror inspection – e.g. the acquisition of self-knowledge, philosophical wonder or awe, dialogic engagement with another person, investigation of the upper realms – but he reduces the high-minded ideas to shallow and quotidian concerns. Mirror inspection (*inspectio*) can

²⁴⁴ It is tempting to make something of the dialogic transition *at ego*, which is also the same bewildering opening of the *Metamorphoses*, one that has plagued interpreters of the Prologue for a very long time. Importantly, the ambiguous narrator of that text is positing a dialogic relationship between himself and the reader, in which he has a mystical experience to offer to the reader/viewer provided that he/she “looks into” the text. See Morgan 2001 for a discussion of the dialogic nature of the opening of the *Metamorphoses*, to which we shall return in chapter 4.

lead to the bewildering vision of the upper realms through the dialogic interaction between the “flow” of bodies and the mirror that reflects them. But the distortions and optical illusions of mirrors are also just exciting and pleasurable to look at; perhaps it is more fun to look at convex or concave mirrors, to see permutations of reality and to speculate, as “philosophers ought to”, about the various causes.

As I suggested at the outset of this chapter, the ethical-philosophical chapters of the *laus speculi* are consistent not only with the constraints of the apology-genre – which is by necessity a high-stakes choice between an accuser and a defendant – but also with the popularization of choice narratives in philosophical and parodic texts of the Second Sophistic. In view of our scan through the literary history of the *extraspective* mirror, moreover, we can see that Apuleius fits quite nicely in this tradition, which proliferates in the second century, of re-appropriating Platonic ideas about the mirror and the self to a model of philosophy concerned with behaviors. The irony of Apuleius’ invective at the close of his encomium is that Aemilianus would fail to mirror-gaze in every tradition: though grotesque, he would not have compensated for his external appearance with virtue, as Seneca’s angry man did when faced with his own distorted face; though feeling marvel and a desire for learning, the object of his education would be not philosophical knowledge, but the furrows and ruts on his face – with his face ironically likened to the landscape of a farm he has worked. And perhaps most interestingly, Apuleius connects this life-style choice to diligent and frequent reading: had Aemilianus read a book, the kind of self-awareness acquired from catoptric speculation would have been the logical next step. That is, there is an intimate relationship implied here between reading, self-knowledge, and catoptrics.

In the chapters that follow, we will turn to the *Metamorphoses* – a text which self-consciously poses as a book²⁴⁵ and which demands a “scrupulous reader” (9.30: *lector scrupulosus*) – and we will analyze the mirroring encounters of Lucius, a character at least as grotesque as Aemilianus in regard to his *mores*. In every mirroring encounter, I argue, Lucius is given a high-stakes choice; and he, being a poor reader of Plato, usually misconstrues the situation and chooses pleasure, no matter what the cost. Essential for the reader, though, is the fact that this grotesque character *becomes* the book (2.12: *libros me futurum*) in a similar conflation of character, text, and thought. As we look into the same mirrors he does – albeit through *reading* his words – the question Apuleius poses for us is how we will choose to respond. The narrator promises us marvel – the experience Aemilianus could have undergone through mirror-gazing. We are given the choice as to how far we will pursue it.

²⁴⁵ See, e.g., Stephen Harrison’s suggestion that the Prologue speaker is the book (Harrison 1990), though I will argue against this line of reasoning in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2: The Seductions of *Ekphrasis*: Platonic *Psychagogia* through Deception:

We saw in the previous chapter how Apuleius engages with the ethical-philosophical tradition of the mirror in its various manifestations in the concluding chapters of the *laus speculi*. I argued there that the blending of multiple traditions in the context of a courtroom drama presents a number of embedded choices for the reader: one has a choice first as to which speaker one should believe, then as to what model of life one ought to follow, and finally as to which mode of viewing one should employ. In this chapter, I will work backwards through the *laus speculi* to its opening argument in chapter 14, in which Apuleius presents a theory of aesthetics that similarly mixes two traditions – a Platonic critique of *mimesis* and a literary and art critical response to it. As we will see, Apuleius claims that what makes the mirror a particularly magical device is its capacity to register motion over time²⁴⁶: it is the most “faithful” type of representation because it changes in response to a metamorphosis in the viewer. However, there is latent in this encomium of specular *mimesis* a Platonic concern about the potentially dangerous and morally harmful effects of visualizing and imagining the insubstantial images that representation produces. The fidelity, it turns out, is that of a courtesan, and the problem with giving in to *mimesis* – consorting with it like a prostitute, as Plato puts it – is dealing with the negative consequences which ensue: obsession such as one would experience in an erotic tryst and the bastard offspring that issue forth from such an encounter.

²⁴⁶ Representing diachronic change was clearly a growing concern of authors and artists at this time, as Sharrock 1996 has demonstrated.

After analyzing how Apuleius develops his own brand of specular aesthetics in *Apologia* 14, we will turn to the famous *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena's atrium, which also raises Platonic questions about representation. How this *ekphrasis* functions within the novel – whether it is a plot device, a prophetic warning, or merely a rhetorical display piece – has long vexed Apuleius scholars.²⁴⁷ One of the most interesting and largely understudied features of the passage is the way in which Lucius-*auctor* focalizes the attention of the reader, slowly zooming in on the reflections in the water rippling at the goddess' feet.²⁴⁸ We are then presented with a verbal description of a visual *mimesis* mediated through a specular representation – three removes from the original artistic *mimesis*. But apart from the implied engagement with Plato in Apuleius' play with mimetic media, the narrator shows us in the mirroring water a series of transformations: the statue of Diana is transformed in its iconography from a “Striding Diana” to a “Bathing Diana”²⁴⁹; Actaeon, too, appears to be in the process of a metamorphosis; and perhaps most imaginatively, the whole Actaeon tradition, which Apuleius had inherited from Callimachus and Ovid,²⁵⁰ is reimagined to be a tale about voyeurism, thus creating a correspondence between the

²⁴⁷ For copious bibliography on this passage, see *GCA* 2001. In particular, Heath 1992, Slater 1998, Paschalis 2002, and Freudenburg 2007 give the most sensitive readings of the scene. The function and affective influence of *ekphrasis* writ large has been of increasing concern to scholars in the last 25 years, and the bibliography, both modern and ancient, is too copious to treat within the bounds of this dissertation. Noteworthy contributions are as follows: on modern studies of *ekphrasis*: Heffernan 1993, Mitchell 1986, Mitchell 1994, Krieger 1992, and Wagner 1996; on ancient studies: Fowler 1990, Elsner 2002, Bartsch and Elsner 2007, Webb 1999, Webb 2009, Putnam 1998, Squire 2009, Squire 2014.

²⁴⁸ It should be noted, however, that there is some disagreement about precisely how this scene is focalized through the narrator. John Heath, who has given the seminal treatment of the *ekphrasis*, says that Lucius describes the statues in Byrrhena's *atrium* “as objects meet his eye” (Heath 1992, 123). Paschalis 2002, 138 says of this suggestion: “This is not accurate. Spatial deictics make the statue of Diana the very center of the arrangement and the very focus of attention.” In this, I agree with Paschalis, though I think there is a shift in focalization in the second half of the *ekphrasis*.

²⁴⁹ See Schlam 1984.

²⁵⁰ On the Actaeon tradition in the literary sources, see the very thorough treatment of Heath 1992.

statue of Actaeon *inside* the ensemble and the viewing spectator *outside* of it.²⁵¹ In what follows, I argue that the mirroring water enacts these metamorphoses, adding temporality to an otherwise fixed statuary ensemble. Moreover, while diachrony is what gives *mimesis* its “fidelity” in the *Apologia*, the erotic danger of consorting with that “faithful” *speculum* lurks behind this visual encounter as well, with Diana transforming into a bathing goddess before our eyes. As Lucius’ relationship to Actaeon is mirrored by the reader’s relationship to Lucius at the conclusion of the novel – that is, as an external viewer gazing on a fixed statue in an ensemble – I propose that the way in which the mirror inspires Lucius’ imagination to run wild with desire (and his mouth to run wild with description) is programmatic for Apuleius. Gazing into a mirror, much like staring into a novel, compels the viewer/reader to be incorporated into the spectacle and to become a part of the scene. Through an *ekphrasis* of a temporal narrative played out in a mirror, Apuleius thus “seduces the reader to succumb to visualization”, to borrow a phrase from Tim Whitmarsh.²⁵²

Before we turn to *Apologia* 14, it will be useful to develop a theoretical framework for analyzing Apuleius’ aesthetic theory and to situate him in the broader Second Sophistic discourse. In the next section, I argue that Apuleius along with other writers of the second century foreshadow Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s influential theory of *ekphrasis*. In his *Laökoön*, he posits that the distinction between the verbal and visual arts is one found in nature – a difference between temporal and spatial representation. I will show that the issue of representing time in *mimesis* becomes a popular *topos* in the

²⁵¹ On Actaeon’s “curious gaze” and the way in which it creates correspondences between Actaeon, Lucius, and reader, see p. 163ff. below.

²⁵² Whitmarsh 2002, 122.

second century, one that sophistic rhetors receive as a challenge, to which they respond through *ekphraseis*. In the Second Sophistic discussions that follow, we will see many of the same terms that recur in Apuleius' praise of the mirror's magic: the verbal arts have the advantage of time in representation (i.e., diachrony); writers must make a choice as to which medium will best incorporate the viewer; and perhaps most importantly, there is an erotic danger involved in viewing and responding in kind. All of these issues recur in the *laus speculi*, where the mirror occupies a paradoxical position somewhere in between the verbal and visual arts. Moreover, Apuleius uses the *speculum*, I suggest, as a metonymy for the expressive potential of words: while the *speculum* may seem naturally to fall on the visual side of the binary, its ability to register time in *mimesis* makes it resemble more closely verbal representation. But there is a moral danger, nonetheless, in looking (or listening), because the viewer (or hearer) can easily be incorporated into the scene and eventually become part of the story. Nowhere will this be clearer than in Apuleius' *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena's atrium, where the mirroring water seduces Lucius (and us) into a risky act of visualization.

Lessing and Second Sophistic Aesthetics:

Any treatment of *ekphrasis* ought to begin with the seminal work of Lessing, whose *Laökoon: oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* offered one of the earliest modern expositions of Homer's 'Shield of Achilles' and Horace's famous *ut pictura poesis*. In this essay, Lessing proposed that the 'plastic' arts could only exist in what he called a "convenient relation" (*bequemes Verhältnis*) with "bodies in space",

whereas poetry and the verbal arts could only depict “actions in time”. For this reason, poetry represents a more sublime medium of *mimesis*, at least insofar as it has narrative potential. As Tom Mitchell describes it:

Reading occurs in time; the signs which are read are uttered or inscribed in a temporal sequence; and the events represented or narrated occur in time. There is thus a kind of homology...between medium, message, and the mental process of decoding.²⁵³

According to this theoretical model, the semiotic value of poetic expression and its faithful representation lies in the fact that words register the passing of time: the *statue* of Laocoon can either be clothed, and thus have the sign ‘robe’, or it can be naked and represent a ‘body’,²⁵⁴ but poetry can manage to conjure in the imagination of the listener both signs interchangeably and in temporal succession. Moreover, painting, in its attempt to avoid the mortification of fixity only has recourse to what Lessing calls a “pregnant moment” (*fruchtbarer Moment*) – that is, a still life depiction that suggests temporality. But poetry provides a more transcendent mimetic medium because of its ability to retain what David Wellbery labels “the end of autonomous imaginative activity”.²⁵⁵

When we turn to the opening of Apuleius’ *laus speculi*, I suggest we will see how Lessing’s representational dichotomy between “bodies in space” and “actions in time” illuminates well the paradoxes of Apuleius’ discussion of specular *mimesis*. Apuleius

²⁵³ Mitchell 1986, 98-9.

²⁵⁴ As proof that ancient thinkers did understand statues to be either clothed or naked, with no possible suggestion of the alternative state, we may compare the anecdote in Pliny’s natural history where he describes the sculpting of the origin of the Knidian Aphrodite. At *Nat. Hist.* 36.20-1, Pliny discusses how Praxiteles originally made two statues of Aphrodite, one naked and one draped with a robe; the Coans bought the clothed statue because they judged it to be honorable and chaste, and the Cnidians purchased the naked version, which, in turn, became one of the most famous statues of antiquity. See Haynes 2013, 77 for discussion.

²⁵⁵ See Wellbery 1984, 133 for the line. For another excellent treatment of Lessing and *ekphrasis*, particularly in relation to Classical literature, see Becker 1995, 9-22.

takes the ability to register diachronic change, or to represent metamorphosis, to be the *sine qua non* of faithful *mimesis*.²⁵⁶ His claim about the mirror's mimetic fidelity, I argue, can be seen as a disguised preference for verbal *mimesis* and the imaginative potential of the word. Moreover, if we consider Apuleius' strange representational preference in the context of the Second Sophistic, we can see that he is, in fact, part of a movement that anticipates Lessing's strict division of the arts according to nature.²⁵⁷ That is, many philosophers and second sophists in Apuleius' milieu wrote similar meditations on intermediality which draw the boundaries between art and literature along precisely the same lines as Lessing, and which touch upon the same representational terms explored in Apuleius' *laus speculi*.

Plutarch, in an opening discussion of his *de gloria Atheniensium*, invokes a pithy remark he attributes to Simonides to discuss the agonistic relationship between the verbal

²⁵⁶ Many recent treatments of the *Apologia* have tried to make sense of Apuleius' representational preferences. Too 1996, whose treatment is perhaps the most extended analysis of the passage, suggests that Apuleius' praise of specular *mimesis* over other representational media has to do with having control over the afterlife of one's artistic representation. It is likely, she explains, that Apuleius rejected a statue that the Carthaginians dedicated to him on the grounds that it would fix his image in an immobile state. As evidence, she cites the model of Alexander for Apuleius, who, according to Apuleius in *Florida* 7, rejected all fixed representational media. Though, it should be noted that Alexander actually only rejects bad artists, and not the media themselves. Hunink 1997 takes issue with Too's interpretation, arguing that she over-reads the mobility piece of the *laus speculi*. However, he seems to be fairly outnumbered in his view that mobility is not so important to Apuleius: see, e.g., Lateiner 2001, Slater 1998, Slater 2003, Paschalis 2002, and Freudenburg 2007, all of whom find something curious about Apuleius' regard for motion in *mimesis*. Paschalis 2002, in particular, comes closest to the argument I will present here insofar as he claims to use Lessing's dichotomy as a guiding principle. But his argument ends up amounting to merely a restatement of Winkler's aporetic interpretation.

²⁵⁷ *Contra* Squire 2009, who argues that Lessing's strict division between the verbal and visual arts is "thoroughly modern in conception" (94) and "*wholly* alien to ancient thought and practice" (96; my italics). While Squire's fundamental objective is to lay bare the theological (and primarily Lutheran) assumptions behind Lessing's dichotomy – an objective he largely succeeds in accomplishing – it is clear from his treatment of Plato at least that the seeds of Lessing's thought had already been planted long before Luther. The following line is illustrative: "The Platonic injunction of the image...might be thought to foreshadow the fundamentals of not only Luther's position, but also, in some sense, Lessing's own" (117). As we are exploring the influence of Platonic thought on second century aesthetics, it is fitting to suppose that some of Plato's repudiation of visual and verbal *mimesis* seeped into these later rhetorical-philosophical treatments.

and visual arts, and to explain how Thucydides mastered “image-making” (εἰδωλοποιεῖν) in his history-writing through his skilled use of ἐνάργεια. At *Moralia* 346f5-347a4, he says:

πλὴν ὁ Σιμωνίδης τὴν μὲν ζωγραφίαν ποίησιν σιωπῶσαν προσαγορεύει, τὴν δὲ ποίησιν ζωγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν. ἃς γὰρ οἱ ζωγράφοι πράξεις ὥς γιγνομένας δεικνύουσι, ταύτας οἱ λόγοι γεγενημένας διηγοῦνται καὶ συγγράφουσιν. εἰ δ' οἱ μὲν χρώμασι καὶ σχήμασιν, οἱ δ' ὀνόμασι καὶ λέξεσι ταῦτα δηλοῦσιν, ὅλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι...

Simonides, however, calls painting silent poetry, and poetry painting that speaks. For the actions that painters portray *at the moment they take place* (ὥς γιγνομένας), words describe and represent after they have already happened (γεγενημένας). But if the former display the same subjects with colors and forms, and the latter with words and phrases, they differ with respect to the material and modes of their *mimesis*.

The fact that this passage appears as the epigraph of *Laökoon* already hints at the influence of this period on Lessing's theoretical division. Here, Plutarch mixes Aristotelian mimetic theory with Platonic categories of *diegesis* and *mimesis*. But, as D. Thomas Benediktson has pointed out, the second sentence explains (γάρ) the problematics of intermediality as an issue of a representation's relationship to time. Comparing the present participle (γινόμεναι) used to depict painting's time relationship to the perfect participle (γεγενημένα) of poetic narrative, Benediktson explains:

Plutarch seems to be making the distinction that paintings or statues are frozen in a permanent present, while the actions of literature are narrated through to the end and hence completed.²⁵⁸

Whether or not Plutarch fully understands the implications of his temporal distinction for the age-old question about the relationship between the poetic and the 'plastic' arts, our next example most certainly recognizes how he is drawing a clear

²⁵⁸ Benediktson 1987, 103.

dichotomy between fixed representation and metamorphic *mimesis*. Dio Chrysostom, a contemporary of Plutarch, devotes the second half of his *Twelfth Oration* to a defense of Pheidias' statue of Zeus by conjuring up the ghost of the famous sculptor, who, in turn, discusses the advantages that poets enjoy in the game of imitation. Whereas the sculptor, Pheidias explains, is confined to a "single pose for each image" (ἐν σχῆμα ἐκάστης εἰκόνοϛ) – and a "motionless and fixed one" (ἀκίνητον καὶ μένον) – poets have the advantage "in respect to both difficulty and time" (τὸ τῆς χαλεπότητοϛ²⁵⁹ καὶ τὸ τοῦ χρόνου). For, he explains:

τοῖϛ δὲ ποιηταῖϛ πολλὰϛ τιναϛ μορφὰϛ καὶ παντοδαπὰ εἶδη περιλαβεῖν τῇ ποιήσῃ ῥάδιον, κινήσειϛ τε καὶ ἡσυχίαϛ προστιθένταϛ αὐτοῖϛ, ὅπωϛ ἂν ἐκάστοτε πρέπειν ἡγῶνται, καὶ ἔργα καὶ λόγουϛ...

...it is easier for poets to encompass in their poetry all manner of shapes and manifold forms, adding motions and stops to them, however they deem it fit each time, as well as deeds and speeches...

Beyond poetry's ability to register movement (κίνησιϛ) over time as compared to the fixed limits of statuary, the key to Dio Chrysostom's aesthetics lies in the ease with which a representational mode can "comprehend" (περιλαβεῖν) variegated "shapes and forms" (μορφὰϛ καὶ...εἶδη) – an aesthetic principle that prompted Alison Sharrock to open her excellent piece 'Representing Metamorphosis' with this anecdote from Chrysostom.²⁶⁰ There is more than a hint of irony, as Sharrock points out, in the fact that Pheidias gives an exposition of the representational advantages of poetry by means of a

²⁵⁹ χαλεπότητοϛ is a conjecture to replace ἀπάτηϛ. As far as I can tell, both seem to make reasonable sense here, but the conjecture works by analogy to Plato's *Critias* 107e, where Critias discusses how difficult it is to represent reality satisfactorily, particularly in the portraiture of divine and human bodies. I am retaining the conjecture because χαλεπότηϛ seems to be a recurring category in Second Sophistic discussions of *mimesis*, as we shall see shortly.

²⁶⁰ See Sharrock 1996, 103-4, and esp. 300 n. 2, where she reads μορφὰϛ as oblique reference to metamorphosis.

sophistic description in words.²⁶¹ We are thus invited by Pheidias' verbal lament over the limits of his own discipline to choose between him and Homer, or rather, to choose which of the two modes of representation we want to look at and how we want to look at it. The fundamental issue at stake in the choice is diachrony.

If we are given an implicit choice between viewing "bodies in space" and "actions in time" in Dio Chrysostom's *Twelfth Oration*, we find an explicit exhortation to a choice over modes of representation in the work of a near successor to Apuleius, Philostratus the Elder. As Jás Elsner notes in passing, an interesting feature of many Philostratean *ekphraseis* – and one particularly relevant to our reading of Lucius' *ekphrasis* of Byrrhaena's atrium – is the fact that Philostratus frequently describes in vivid detail paintings of scenes that we do not have extant in the literary or visual repertoire, such as death scenes that are elided in messenger speeches²⁶² or paintings that do not seem to have been well-defined artistic *topoi*.²⁶³ One such *ekphrasis*, *Imagines* 2.10, will be illustrative for us to consider in our attempt to situate Apuleius' *laus speculi*, particularly since Philostratus also embeds in it a choice between modes of representation and types of viewing. This set-piece description, which narrates a painting of Clytemnestra's

²⁶¹ Squire 2009, 101 n. 31 dismisses Dio's treatment here as a relevant antecedent to Lessing in part on the grounds that "Dio ends by suggesting that Pheidias' anthropomorphic image in fact outstrips the poetic description in the *Iliad*". However, I think it would be more appropriate to say that Dio's Pheidias – the one who speaks in Dio's *words* and not the real sculptor – seems to outstrip the description in the *Iliad*. Sharrock 1996 notes how ironic it is that Pheidias competes with Homer through words rather than sculpture. Cf. Benediktson 1987 and 2000, 177-85 for a discussion of the similarity between the distinction Dio's Pheidias makes and Lessing's dichotomy.

²⁶² See Elsner 2007a, 312: "Philostratean ecphrasis...genuflects (especially) to Euripidean ecphrasis (in so far as Euripides' messenger speeches bring to mind descriptively events, including objects, not seen directly on stage), while simultaneously surpassing Euripides' failure to enact the deaths of Pentheus, Hippolytus, or the children of Heracles by offering a painting that fills the absence".

²⁶³ *Ibid.*: "...it is interesting that the tragic climaxes seized upon by Philostratus are relatively rare in Graeco-Roman art in general and particularly so in the period in which Philostratus was writing (so far as we can tell from the surviving material)".

murder of Cassandra and Agamemnon, relays a rather gory scene of striking pathos.

Though the *ekphrasis* begins *in medias res* and illuminates a brutal scene of slaughter, the narrator abruptly interrupts the scene for a very strange interpretive comment. With the axe still warm from the slaughter, Philostratus interjects:

καὶ εἰ μὲν ὥς δράμα ἐξετάζομεν, ὃ παῖ, ταῦτα, τετραγώδεται μεγάλα ἐν σμικρῷ,
εἰ δ' ὥς γραφήν, πλείω ἐν αὐτοῖς ὄψει.

If we examine this scene as a drama, my boy, a great tragedy has been enacted in a brief space of time, but if [we consider it] as a painting, you will see more in it.

As the *ekphrasis* continues – with a classic mode of ekphrastic incorporation, σκόπει γάρ – Philostratus describes a series of “actions in time”, adding a diachronic narrative to an already fixed scene through his own exegesis. What this word πλείω means in context has long been a source of confusion, and naturally invites the question, ‘more than what?’.²⁶⁴

At the very least, it must mean that one will see more than one would if one read

Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, since this scene is narrated in Aeschylus through a messenger

speech. Philostratus is not actually suggesting, however, that a painting (γραφή) would

reveal more, because, as he continues the *ekphrasis* (a different kind of γραφή),²⁶⁵ the

temporal narrative that he supplies is evidently the substance of the πλείω. That is, as the

sophistic describer begins to expound upon the scene, his interpretation slowly transforms

into narrative, until the very end of the *ekphrasis*, at which point, the narrator focalizes

the scene on the final interaction between Cassandra and Clytemnestra. The central focus

²⁶⁴ Beall 1993, 352 takes the πλείω to mean “its moral and philosophical significance”. Elsner 2007a, 331 interprets it as representative of Philostratus’ “studied ambiguity” insofar as it highlights the agonistic relationship with drama, tragedy, and verbal-visual interactions writ large.

²⁶⁵ For the dual meaning of γραφή, which becomes its own kind of trope in the Second Sophistic, we may recall, e.g., the prologue to Longus’ *Daphnis & Chloe*. All of the Second Sophistic texts that play with the semantic ambiguity of this word, however, may be alluding to the end of the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates discusses the strange quality of fixity that “writing” (γραφή) and “painting” (ζωγραφία) share.

becomes the pitiable sight of Cassandra, as Clytemnestra stands over her, “darting a crazy glance” (μανικὸν βλέπουσα) with her “hair flowing violently” (σεσοβημένη τὰς χαίτας) and her “arm raised savagely” (τραχεῖα τὴν ὠλένην); it is at that moment that Cassandra, who has attempted to fall over Agamemnon, “turns her eyes” (ἀναστρέφει τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς) towards the falling axe and “utters so pathetic a cry” (βοᾷ δὲ οὕτω τι οἰκτρόν) that Agamemnon feels pity for her with his last remnant of life. The description is transformed from a mere exegesis of the painting to a narrative of “actions in time” – a feature which is emphasized with the change of verbal tense, from the perfect (e.g., ἐφέστηκε) to the present indicative (ἀναστρέφει). That the painting (γραφὴ) makes a sound for the reader to hear creates a kind of synaesthetic experience of reading – a phenomenon Andrew Laird has labeled “disobedient *ekphrasis*”.²⁶⁶ This synaesthesia further highlights Philostratus’ agonistic relationship with his models, especially if we consider that stage drama involves actual sounds. Just as in Chrysostom’s prosopopoeia of Pheidias, where the reader is given a choice between looking at visual art or listening to verbal art, Philostratus’ strange exegetical interjection simultaneously recalls its models while giving us a choice as to how we might see them – as a drama or a γραφή.

The final *ekphrasis* worth considering before we return to Apuleius’ *laus speculi* occurs in *De domo* written by Lucian, a sophistic writer contemporary with Apuleius.²⁶⁷ In this piece, we encounter a comic dialogue between two learned interlocutors about the appropriate response to visual beauty – specifically, the visual experience of a finely

²⁶⁶ See Laird 1993.

²⁶⁷ Although this fascinating text opens interesting avenues for scholars of the Second Sophistic practice of *ekphrasis*, it has rarely been studied in detail. Goldhill 2001a, Newby 2002, and Dobrov 2002 are the exceptions.

decorated hall. The first interlocutor suggests that only an uncultured man (ιδιώτης) would stand dumbstruck in marvel (θαυμάσας), leaving the sight “noiseless and without a speech” (κωφὸν...καὶ ἄλογον); the educated man (πεπαιδευμένος), on the other hand, would not be content to remain a “silent beholder of beauty” (ἄφωνος θεατῆς τοῦ κάλλους) but would attempt, by the very nature of the experience, “to repay the sight with a speech” (λόγῳ ἀμείψασθαι τὴν θέαν). This first speaker in the competition adds a number of erotic undertones to his description of responding to visual beauty: the educated man must behave as Alexander the Great did upon seeing the river Cydnus, namely, to conceive of an erotic desire (ἐπεθύμησεν) to become one with it by bathing in it; the visual beauty of the ceiling and its simplicity of form, moreover, are likened to a modest yet beautiful woman (γυναικὶ σώφροني καὶ καλῇ), who, unlike courtesans (ἐταῖραι), prefers to show her beauty naked (γυμνή). We may add to these overtly erotic valences a number of echoes of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, with the speaker likening himself to Socrates flowing forth in speech beside the famous plane tree.²⁶⁸ Zahra Newby has even suggested that the hall is as an Echo figure, which, in turn, transforms the first speaker into a Narcissus,²⁶⁹ at least for a reader familiar with Ovid’s account of Narcissus and Echo.

²⁶⁸ Beyond the overt invocation of Socrates beside the plane tree (4), this text even deals in the *Phaedran* erotics of visual experience in subtle ways. See, e.g., the language of flow in the opening line of *de Domo* 4: σχεδὸν γὰρ εἰσρεῖ τι διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν καλόν, εἴτα πρὸς αὐτὸ κοσμήσαν ἐκπέμπει τοὺς λόγους. The beauty of the hall is said to flow in “through the eyes” (διὰ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν) – a phrase that is of great importance to the *Phaedran* model of erotic reciprocity, as we will see in the next chapter – and then to inspire a specular response in words. Though, cf. Goldhill 2001a, 162, who connects this to Stoic materialist theories of optics.

²⁶⁹ Newby 2002, 127: “While the word Echo is not used here, though the verb συνεπηχῶν...does appear a little earlier, the reference to a maiden is a clear allusion to the story of Echo, most famous as the lover of Narcissus. If the hall is thus equated with Echo, the speaker takes the role of Narcissus, for whom, according to Ovid, she wasted away with love. This Narcissus, however, is a rhetor, who actively enjoys being the object of such aural attention”.

While the dialogue opens *in medias res* without a clear marker that it is even a dialogue, a second speaker is announced in the very middle, and the whole piece is transformed into opposing arguments in a court case, with the audience unwittingly cast into the role of jury.²⁷⁰ This ἕτερος λόγος, though he argues that silent marvel is a perfectly legitimate response to beauty, nevertheless decides to vie with the images through a rhetorical *ekphrasis*. That is, ostensibly, he disagrees with the original λόγος: calling Herodotus to the stand as a witness, he explains that the “ears happen to be less trustworthy than the eyes” (ὦτα γὰρ τυγχάνει ἀνθρώποισι ἐόντα ἀπιστότερα ὀφθαλμῶν).²⁷¹ Herodotus’ aphorism also explains why the Sirens, who “charm” (ἐκήλουν) passersby, are less powerful than the Gorgons, whose beauty transforms beholders into “stone from wonder” (λίθινοι ἐγίγνοντο ὑπὸ θαύματος). But even though this speaker seems dead set against vying with images, in the end he chooses to attempt a word painting – again, a γραφή – for the attendant viewers because they will “take pleasure to hear about the things that cause them marvel to see” (ἡσθήσεσθε...ἀκούοντες ἃ καὶ ὁρῶντες θαυμάζετε): and just before beginning his *ekphrasis*, this speaker claims that “word painting is but a naked thing” (ψιλὴ γὰρ τις ἡ γραφή τῶν λόγων), since it is impossible to render “such beautiful images” (τοσαύτας εἰκόνας) “without colors, forms,

²⁷⁰ Newby 2002, 130: “...halfway through the piece we suddenly find that there is, in fact, another speaker ready to put the alternative case for us and to argue the dangers of speaking in such a beautiful room...So ἕτερος λόγος...comes to the stand, framing the dialogue as a court case, in which his audience, and by implication the reader, is the jury”.

²⁷¹ The line comes from Herodotus’ Gyges and Candaules narrative in 1.8.2, where the king tries to convince his servant to look at his wife naked, since words about her beauty would not suffice. The full quotation from Lucian continues as follows (*de Domo* 20):...τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἔπεα πτερόεντά ἐστι καὶ οἴχεται ἅμα τῷ προσελθεῖν ἀποπτάμενα, ἡ δὲ τῶν ὁρωμένων τέρψις αἰεὶ παρεστῶσα καὶ παραμένουσα πάντως τὸν θεατὴν ὑπάγεται. Dobrov 2002, 176 n. 11 notes here a “sort of inversion of the ancient prejudice in favor of the ‘living’ spoken word as opposed to debilitating representation”, and cites as a *comparandum* passage of the *Phaedrus* (*Phaedr.* 274e-75b) with which Apuleius is also engaging, as I will show later.

or space” (ἄνευ χρωμάτων καὶ σχημάτων καὶ τόπου).²⁷² After giving this strange exegetical interlude, the speaker breaks into a museum-tour style *ekphrasis* – i.e., “on your right, you’ll see” (ἐν δεξιᾷ) – filled with narrative description akin to Philostratus’.

Compiling thematic elements from all of these Second Sophistic treatments, I suggest that we can situate the particular oddities we will see in Apuleius’ treatment of *mimesis* within an aesthetic movement that anticipates Lessing’s influential analysis of the boundaries of the verbal and the visual. Plutarch traces the difference between mimetic media to a distinction in temporality and material; and similarly, Dio Chrysostom connects poetry’s particular mimetic power to its ability to represent metamorphosis – encompassing variegated forms and shapes (μορφὰς καὶ παντοδαπὰ εἶδη) – and links the advantages of the poetic art to time (τὸ τοῦ χρόνου). Philostratus, making the embedded choice between modes of representation explicit, describes a scene passed over in the literary and the visual repertoire, and then exhorts his reader to see “more” by looking at it “as a painting/*ekphrasis*” (ὡς γραφήν) rather than “as a drama” (ὡς δρᾶμα).

When we come to Lucian, then, we find the final piece that is also latent in Apuleius’ *laus speculi*, as we will see shortly, namely, the presentation of desire for narrative in erotic terms. Just as Alexander desired “to become part of the beauty” (μέρος τοῦ κάλλους αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι) of the river Cydnus, no matter how much harm it might do him, a cultured spectator of beauty, upon experiencing stupefaction at beauty and conceiving of a similar erotic desire for narrative, must describe the pictures in an

²⁷² See Goldhill 2001a, 165 on the value of χρώματα (Lat. *colores*) and σχήματα as rhetorical terms, and therefore, as an embedded joke on the power of verbal production. *Color*, in particular, will become important when we turn to Apuleius.

ekphrasis. Or to phrase it differently, though verbal response is dangerous – and indeed, in a Platonic framework, all *mimesis* can be dangerous in erotic terms – Lucian’s *de Domo* demands for the reader to make choices: both a courtroom choice between two contradictory λόγοι and a deeper philosophical choice about what the appropriate response to seeing visual beauty is. Is it dumbstruck wonder and silent awe, as the myth of Plato’s *Phaedrus* might have us believe, or is it philosophical and/or rhetorical reflection, as the *Phaedran* Socrates suggests in the Siren-cicada choice? Moreover, with the subtle allusion to Narcissus and Echo in the reverberating nymph-like room, we are invited to see the relationship between viewer and room not only as a specular interaction between lover and beloved, but specifically as one that has potentially transcendent and/or deadly delusional effects on anyone who enters.

To conclude this survey through the Second Sophistic discussions of intermediality, we should take a moment to meditate on the exegetical comment with which Lucian’s ἕτερος λόγος opens his *ekphraseis*, since it seems to allude to a Platonic embedded choice. Recall how he introduces the difficult task of *ekphrasis*: “word-painting is a naked thing” (ψιλὴ γάρ τις ἢ γραφὴ τῶν λόγων). In applying the adjective ψιλός to a type of speaking (λόγοι), we may also be invited to remember one of the εἰκόνες of Socrates at the end of the *Symposium*, namely, how he is similar to the satyr Marsyas in his ability to charm listeners: whereas Marsyas requires an αὐλός to accomplish his beguiling effect on listeners, Socrates uses only ψιλοὶ λόγοι to bewitch whoever listens to him.²⁷³ This passage, too, represents an embedded choice between

²⁷³ To my knowledge, no one has noticed this clear allusion to the end of the *Symposium*, which is made perhaps even more evident by the dialogic situation of speech competition before an audience. Strangely,

modes of viewing and listening, as I will argue more fully in chapter 4; and here, Alcibiades, the encomiast of Socrates' beauty, also uses the language of stripping away the external barriers, which obscure the real, naked Socrates within – a Socrates who ironically happens to be another type of representation, an ἄγαλμα. Thus, Lucian not only combines diachrony and erotic desire with a choice narrative about the appropriate responses to viewing, but he even subtly portrays the very act of *ekphrasis* as the same activity that Socrates inaugurated with his synaesthetic bewitchment of anyone that came into contact with him. As we will see in the next section, Apuleius prefaces his mirror usage with a strong claim about the *speculum*'s mimetic power – a claim that involves erotic desire for narrative, the ability to register change over time, and a preference for the courtesan-fidelity of catoptric *mimesis*. While Apuleius is situated in the Second Sophistic and participates in this aesthetic movement, however, his particular expression of the competitive relationship between mimetic media is uniquely Platonic. Therefore, in what follows, we will analyze how Apuleius inherits this concern for diachrony in representation from his contemporaries but skews it to offer a Platonic moral lesson to the reader.

The Courtesan-mirror of Apologia 14: Erotic and Narrative Desire:

Now that we have seen the Second Sophistic contextual underpinnings to Apuleius' representational claims in *Apologia* 14, it is fitting to turn to Apuleius' *laus*

even a reader as sensitive as Goldhill, who deals with this line (Goldhill 2001a, 165), seems to have missed it.

speculi proper in order to establish the particular terms of catoptric *mimesis* that I will argue are at play in ekphrastic passages of the *Metamorphoses*. We will see here a concern for the same particular features of *mimesis* that other Second Sophistic writers highlighted in their reflections on intermediality – diachrony, metamorphosis, erotic and narrative desire, and choice – but Apuleius’ take on it has an especially Platonic bent. While the *speculum* at first appears to occupy a middle ground between “bodies in space” and “actions in time”, I will suggest that the mirror functions as a metonymy for the imaginative potential of the verbal arts. Whereas chapters 15 and 16 of the *Apologia* offer an extended meditation on the ethico-philosophical benefits of mirror-gazing, as we saw in chapter 1 of this dissertation, chapter 14 opens the *laus speculi* with a rather striking take on the age-old literary question about *mimesis*, one that bears vestiges of Plato’s discussion in *Republic* 10 but also diverges from it significantly on one key point, the *speculum*.²⁷⁴

nisi forte quod artificio elaboratum laudabile habetur, hoc natura oblatum culpabile iudicandum est, cum sit in ea uel magis miranda et facilitas et similitudo. quippe in omnibus manu faciundis imaginibus opera diutina sumitur, neque tamen similitudo aequae ut in speculis comparet; deest enim et luto uigor et saxo color et picturae rigor et motus omnibus, qui praecipua fide similitudinem repraesentat, cum in eo uisitur imago mire relata, ut similis, ita mobilis et ad omnem nutum hominis sui morigera; eadem semper contemplantibus aequaeua est ab ineunte pueritia ad obeuntem senectam, tot aetatis uices induit, tam uarias habitudines corporis participat, tot uultus eiusdem laetantis uel dolentis imitatur. enimuero quod luto fictum uel aere infusum uel lapide incussum uel cera inustum uel pigmento illitum uel alio quopiam humano artificio adsimulatum est, non multa intercapedine temporis dissimile redditur et ritu cadaueris unum uultum et immobilem possidet. tantum praestat imaginis artibus ad similitudinem referendam leuitas illa speculi fabra et splendor opifex.

²⁷⁴ Too 1996, 135 oversimplifies its relationship to Platonic concerns about *mimesis*: “Apuleius firmly reiterates the Platonic line on the inferiority of imitation”.

Unless perhaps that which is fashioned through artifice with skill (i.e., sculpture) is considered praiseworthy, but this one offered by nature (i.e., a reflection in a mirror) is blameworthy, even though in it the facility and similarity of representation are perhaps more marvelous. Clearly, in the crafting of all images by hand, long labor is spent, and still, they never attain to a similarity that compares to that found in mirrors. For clay is lacking in vigor, rock in color, and painting in firmness, and all of them are lacking in motion, which conveys similarity with particular fidelity. Since in it (i.e., a mirror), an image is seen, marvelously rendered, both similar and mobile, and subservient to every nod of its man. For those looking into it, it always remains at their same age from the entrance of boyhood to old age as it departs. It adopts so many changes of age, participates in so many varying appearances of the body, and imitates so many expressions of the same man, both when he takes pleasure and when he endures pain. For anything molded from clay or cast in bronze or carved in stone or expressed in wax or spread with color or imitated by any other human skill, is rendered dissimilar in no great space of time; in the manner of a corpse, it possesses one motionless face. So much does that skillful smoothness and artistic shine of a mirror surpass the representational arts in regard to returning similarity.

While every type of artistic representation has its particular mimetic flaws – i.e., clay is lacking *vigor*, rock *color*, and painting *rigor* – the operative term lacking in all representational “fidelity” is motion (*motus*).²⁷⁵ That is to say, “movement” is what supplies the *praecipua fides* to a visual representation.²⁷⁶ Upon closer inspection, though, it is not really motion so much as diachronic change that the ‘plastic’ arts fail to represent. Indeed, specular *mimesis* at any given time depicts the viewer (*contemplans*) as the appropriate age (*aequaeva*) even though he or she has gotten older (*ab ineunte pueritia ad obeuntem senectam*); moreover, the *imago* of the *speculum* imitates not only changes (*vices*) in age, but also variations of physical and emotional states: “so many

²⁷⁵ The *locus classicus* for representational fidelity in Latin literature is Horace’s *Ars Poet.* 133-4: *nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus interpres, nec desilies imitator in artum*. These lines seem to be concerned not merely with strict “faithful” translation but with a kind of exegesis of familiar tales – which Horace refers to as *publica materies*. The notion of mimetic “return” (*reddere*) is precisely what is at issue in the Apuleius passage (cf. *reditur*). On how this line from Horace is interpreted in later criticism, see Copeland 1991. Below, I will suggest that the “mobile” fidelity of the mirror has to potential to tell a story, and therefore, a new interpretation and exegesis of a tale familiar from mythology.

²⁷⁶ Apuleius’ praise of specular motion is elaborated on to varying degrees in Too 1996, Slater 1998, and Paschalis 2002.

faces of the same man both when he delights and when he grieves” (*eiusdem laetantis uel dolentis*). In other words, the ‘plastic’ arts fail to represent metamorphosis, a key association of the mirror, as we saw in the previous chapter.²⁷⁷ We may be reminded of Dio Chrysostom’s prosopopoeia of Pheidias, wherein the famous sculptor claims that poets can encompass variegated shapes and forms: the mirror, for all its Platonic baggage, seems to exist in a middle space between the temporal and spatial boundaries Lessing draws for the verbal and visual arts, at least insofar as it manages to reveal bodies in space performing series of actions.²⁷⁸

Although Apuleius attributes the mimetic fidelity of *speculum* to its “similarity” and “mobility”, the catoptric *imago* possesses a rather strange kind of *fides*: it is said to be “subservient to every nod of its man” (*ad omnem nutum sui hominis morigera*). *Morigera* is a marked term here, one that is primarily used to describe courtesans and prostitutes in Roman comedy.²⁷⁹ No doubt, that is how Apuleius understood this term, as he employs it in this way to describe the debased sexual behavior of Aemilianus at *Apologia* 74, playing the submissive, pathic role in a youthful erotic tryst²⁸⁰; in *Met.* 2.5,

²⁷⁷ It bears remembering that the “metamorphic” mirror is one of the primary categories Taylor 2008 delineates. Cf. again Sharrock 1996 for a great discussion of how Romans thought about representing metamorphosis both visually and verbally.

²⁷⁸ Michael Paschalis, who offers his own analysis of Byrrhena’s atrium in the terms of Lessing, notes on this passage: “Had Lessing been interested in mirror reflections, he would undoubtedly have said that mirrors are capable of rendering both ‘bodies in space’ and ‘actions in time’” (Paschalis 2002, 137-8).

²⁷⁹ See *TLL*.b: *speciatim in re veneria*. Adams 1982, 164 deals with this term in same entry as *officium* (on which, see my reading of *Met.* 2.4 below). There, he suggests that its earliest meaning in Plautus concerned “the ideal married relationship of wife to husband” (quoting Williams 1958), but soon after, came to be associate with the behavior of prostitutes and courtesans.

²⁸⁰ See *Apol.* 74, where Apuleius lambasts Aemilianus for debased behavior (as a receiving partner) in his youth: *olim in pueritia, priusquam isto caluitio deformaretur, emasculatoribus suis ad omnia infanda morigerus, mox in iuuentute saltandis fabulis exossis plane et eneruis, sed, ut audio, indocta et rudi mollitia* (“once, in his boyhood, before he was deformed by that baldness, [Aemilianus] was submissive to his pederasts in all manner of unspeakable behaviors, and then, in his youth, by performing evidently boneless and nerveless dances in pantomimes, but ones, as I have heard, with an unlearned and crude

moreover, we encounter men whom Pamphile transforms into animals because they are *minus morigeri* – “less submissive” in an erotic sense; and lastly, at 2.16, Lucius begs Photis to show him how “submissive” she is (*ut mihi morem plenius gesseris*)²⁸¹ by letting her hair down – a scene that will be of great interest again when we consider the *Haarspiegel* in chapter 3. In both *Met.* 2.5 and 2.16, we should further note, “submissiveness” is intimately tied to metamorphosis: the *minus morigeri* are transformed as a punishment for their refusal of erotic submission, whereas Photis, by letting her hair down “submissively”, enacts her metamorphosis into the Knidian Aphrodite.²⁸² In our current passage, the *fides* of catoptric *mimesis* is thus likened to a woman (or a pathic man) who will do anything the viewer/client wants no matter how much time has passed in the relationship. Or, to phrase it differently, the mirror’s mimetic virtue of registering diachrony seems strangely at odds with a model of fidelity that requires no temporal development: the literary archetype of faithfulness, Homer’s Penelope, demonstrates her devotion to her husband through tests and trials *over time*²⁸³; but the *fides* of a courtesan, though quite literally *morigera* to every nod of its man, is not really *fides* at all, at least not the kind of *fides* that exemplary models of feminine behavior demonstrate.

softness.”). In addition to associations of *morigerus* with pederasty and submissive sexual behavior, we may be reminded here of Lucius’ refusal to disbelieve a *fabula* on the grounds that he witnessed a young boy perform a “boneless and sinew-less dance” (*enervam et exossam saltationem*).

²⁸¹ See Adams 1982, 164 for the development of the idiom *morem gero* and its later associations with passive sexual behavior.

²⁸² See *Met.* 2.17, which clearly recalls the iconography of the Knidian Aphrodite: *Neci mora, cum omnibus illis cibariis vasculis raptim remotis, laciniis cunctis suis renudata, crinibus quam dissolutis ad hilarem lasciviam in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum femina rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia...* I will return to this passage again in the next chapter, where I will discuss how it relates to the viewing choice elaborated upon in pseudo-Lucian’s *Amores*.

²⁸³ I should note that this comparison is complicated by the fact that Penelope, while faithful to her husband (at least in the *Odyssey*), is not a faithful narrator or story-teller, but a duplicitous one.

The strangeness of Apuleius' metaphor for mimetic realism should become even clearer with a little more philological digging into the word *fides*: while I initially assumed it would be an age-old representational metaphor, the word is, in fact, nowhere else used in connection with the 'plastic' arts. Indeed, the only type of mimetic fidelity within the semantic range of *fides* concerns narrative or historiographical fidelity.²⁸⁴ To put it in Lessing's terms, *fides* is a term in representational semantics only associated with the verisimilitude of narrative – "actions in time" – but Apuleius expands the semantic range of the word to explain what "bodies in space" lack. Other modes of *mimesis* are *not* faithful because fidelity as a representational concept only relates to "actions in time". Considering Apuleius' erotic characterization of specular *mimesis*, moreover, it should also be noted that *fides* is a recurring term in lyric and elegiac poetry to describe the infidelity of a lover: consider, for instance, Horace's *Odes* 1.5, in which the poet laments the "changed faith" (*fides mutata*) of a beloved,²⁸⁵ and *Odes* 1.33, in which Horace encourages a certain Albius not to waste his time writing "miserable elegies" (*miserabiles elegos*) about a betrayal of fidelity (*laesa fides*).²⁸⁶ What is at issue

²⁸⁴ See *TLL. caput prius*.II.B.1 (*de dictis vel rebus fictis*), where one can find a great number of citations about the *fides* of a historical or written account. Of particular interest are a line from Seneca's *Natural Questions*, in which he questions the *fides* of Homer (*Nat. Quaest.* 6.26: *si Homero fides est*) on issues of geography, and Horace's *Ars Poetica* 52, in which he recommends to poets the creation of neologisms in order to add *fides* to their work (*et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem*). In Horace especially, the process of poetic construction (or *mimesis*) is framed in terms of constructing visual art: neologisms are helpful "in weaving together words" (46: *in verbis...serendis*). Narrative fidelity constitutes a classic trope of historiography that can be traced all the way back to Pericles' funeral oration in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*: "it is difficult for a speaker to be believed" (χεῖρον εἰπόντι πιστευθῆναι) because the words seem to "exaggerate" (πλεονάζεσθαι) the deeds. This *locus classicus* on narrative πίστις then elicits a number of allusions to Pericles' claim in Roman historiography, wherein verbal descriptions of "actions in time" seem to outstrip the realism of the events.

²⁸⁵ *Odes* 1.5.5-8: ...heu quotiens fidem/ mutatosque deos flebit et aspera/ nigris aequora ventis/ emirabitur insolens.

²⁸⁶ See *TLL. caput prius*.II.A.2.c.α, labeled *inter amores* under the heading *in re amatoria*. In some cases, this type of *fides* concerns mutual or reciprocal fidelity between the poet and his beloved, as, e.g., in Prop.

in the world of erotics, therefore, is the stability or mutability of *fides*. It is no coincidence, then, that a near quotation of Apuleius' phrase *praecipua fides* recurs in an adultery tale in *Metamorphoses* 9, when a husband named Barbarus worries about how to protect the chastity of his wife, who is ironically named after another ideal Homeric wife, Arete: in the hope of preserving her *pudicitia*, Barbarus entrusts his wife to a servant "of particular fidelity" (*Met.* 9.17: *praecipua fidelitas*), who, in turn, hires her out to a young suitor for a good time. Though this *fidelitas* refers to the servant rather than the wife in this passage, I think the point still stands that mimetic *fides* is framed in terms of serving a master and relates to obedience and subordination. Even in the case of an 'Arete' in Apuleius, *fides* is for sale, just as it is in Roman elegy,²⁸⁷ and resembles a meretricious rather than marital erotic love, especially in its ability to change and adapt over time.

Beyond merely participating in a Second Sophistic aesthetic movement, the passage in question also alludes to a much richer philosophical background. In light of his self-proclaimed Platonic affiliations, it seems fitting first to compare Apuleius' preference for catoptric *mimesis* to Plato's well-known expulsion of poetry from the ideal state in *Republic* 10, which he opens by means of an analogy that has, as Ernst Gombrich phrased it, "haunted the philosophy of art ever since."²⁸⁸ There, Socrates uses the κάτοπτρον as a stand-in for all forms of *mimesis* – but in particular, painting and poetry – which, in turn, leads to the famous claim that all representation is "twice removed" from

1.4.16, 1.12.8, 2.20.4, 2.20.18, 2.20.34, etc. However, it can also refer to the infidelity of the elegiac beloved, as in Horace *Odes* 1.33.1-4. It should also be noted that *fides* can refer to marital fidelity (*TLL. caput prius*.II.A.2.c. β) of the sort displayed by the archetypal Penelope (cf. esp. Ovid *Trist.* 5.14.26: *Penelopea fides*). But, in many of the instances cited in the *TLL*, marital *fides* is ironically invoked, as, e.g., in Seneca's *Agamemnon*, where Clytemnestra laments the loss of *casta fides* (*Ag.* 111).

²⁸⁷ Indeed, *fides* and its cognates recur all over the adultery tales of book 9, which recount the faithlessness of women known for their chastity (as, e.g., in the tale of the fuller's wife, starting at 9.23).

²⁸⁸ Gombrich 1977, 79.

reality (10.599a1: τριττὰ ἀπέχοντα τοῦ ὄντος) – i.e., from the original form of an object.²⁸⁹ While Socrates (facetiously) suggests that the κάτοπτρον can “create” (10.596e1: ποιεῖν) whatever objects one faces it toward– including objects not directly accessible to human vision, such as, e.g., the gods, things in the underworld, the sun, and everything in the sky, etc.²⁹⁰ – the interlocutor predictably protests that this is not a real act of creation: the mirror only depicts φαινόμενα rather than ὄντα γέ που τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. The deception of specular viewing is then extended to a broader criticism of the mimetic arts, with a particular focus on painting (ζωγραφία) and, by one further step in the analogy, poetry.

The implied problem of perspective in Plato’s criticism of catoptric *mimesis* – i.e., (1) who is looking into the mirror?, and (2) at what angles? – is made explicit in the analysis of painting: a couch, Socrates explains, “whether you look at it from the side, or down from above, or from whatever angle” (10.598a7ff.: ἐάντε ἐκ πλαγίου αὐτήν θεῷ ἐάντε καταντικρὺ ἢ ὀπιοῦν), is not *essentially* different, but merely “appears different” (φαίνεται δὲ ἄλλοία). Since a painting thus transforms a three-dimensional object into a two-dimensional visualization of that object, however, it must by necessity focalize an object from one particular angle, thereby obscuring the essential nature of that object.²⁹¹

That Plato conveniently disregards three-dimensional visual media in his attack is not

²⁸⁹ Halliwell 1988, 116 *ad loc.* 597e3 elaborates: “The idea of an ontological hierarchy (a series of levels of reality) is now firmly brought into play.”

²⁹⁰ Halliwell 1988, 112 *ad loc.* 596e3 notes the absurdity of this claim: “...it is not clear how a mirror could produce images of the gods...the argument runs tendentiously ahead of itself; this is even true of the uses of the verb *poiein* (make/produce) in this context.” Murray 1996, 194 *ad loc.* 596c4-9 implies that the phrase τὰ ἐν Ἄιδου could allude to Polygnotus’ painting of Hades at Delphi.

²⁹¹ However, cf. the distinction Halliwell 1988, 117 *ad loc.* 598a9 draws “between (a) ‘appears as if it *were* different’, and (b) ‘shows a different aspect of its appearance’”. Halliwell suggests that Plato is not being precise here by conflating this important distinction “so as to tarnish even further the credentials of *mimesis*”.

only a substantial and well-known flaw in his argument,²⁹² but is also a feature of his criticism that will play an interesting role in our assessment of Lucius' *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena's atrium, as Lucius focalizes three-dimensional mimetic media through the two-dimensional medium of the mirroring water.

As book 10's argument proceeds to poetry, Socrates likens the listener's/viewer's engagement with *mimesis* to that of consorting with a *ἐταίρα*. At 10.603a10-b2, he explains:

τοῦτο τοίνυν διομολογήσασθαι βουλόμενος ἔλεγον ὅτι ἡ γραφικὴ καὶ ὅλως ἡ μιμητικὴ πόρρω μὲν τῆς ἀληθείας ὅν τὸ αὐτῆς ἔργον ἀπεργάζεται, πόρρω δ' αὖ φρονήσεως ὄντι τῷ ἐν ἡμῖν προσομιλεῖ τε καὶ ἐταίρα καὶ φίλη ἐστὶν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ ὕγιεῖ οὐδ' ἀληθεῖ.

It was with the aim of getting agreement on just this point that I said that painting, and mimetic art as a whole, produces work which is far from the truth; and far from wisdom too is the element within us with which it consorts like a mistress and beloved, for no sound or true purpose.

Just as a meretricious love could result in unwanted, bastard children, Plato characterizes *mimesis* in book 10 "as a courtesan engaging in a liaison which produces defective offspring".²⁹³ In extending this erotic metaphor to the verbal arts, in turn, Socrates explains that mimetic poetry "imitates men in action...who think that they have fared well or badly, and who, in all these actions, either grieve or rejoice" (10.603c4: *πράττοντας... ἀνθρώπους μιμεῖται ἡ μιμητικὴ... ἢ εὖ οἰομένους ἢ κακῶς πεπραγέναι, καὶ ἐν τούτοις δὴ πᾶσιν ἢ λυπουμένους ἢ χαίροντας*). And finally, this attack on *mimesis* comes to a head with one of the most famous passages of Platonic writing, namely, the exposition of the

²⁹² See, e.g., Murray 1996, 200 *ad loc.* 598b6-8: "The generalization from painting to mimetic art as a whole...is slipped in unobtrusively; but the argument just used in relation to painting cannot be straightforwardly applied to a three-dimensional medium like sculpture, let alone poetry."

²⁹³ See Halliwell 1988, 135 *ad loc.* 603b1. See also p. 156 *ad loc.* 607e4: "Poetry is implicitly the kind of seductive *hetaera*, courtesan...with whom young men may fall disastrously in love, but from whom older and mature men, despite some lingering affection, will keep their distance".

famous “ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy”, which is once again framed in erotic terms (10.607e3ff.):

εἰ δέ γε μή, ὦ φίλε ἑταῖρε, ὥσπερ οἱ ποτέ του ἐρασθέντες, ἐὰν ἡγήσωνται μὴ ὠφέλιμον εἶναι τὸν ἔρωτα, βία μὲν, ὅμως δὲ ἀπέχονται, καὶ ἡμεῖς οὕτως... ἕως δ' ἂν μὴ οἷα τ' ἢ ἀπολογήσασθαι, ἀκροασόμεθ' αὐτῆς ἐπάδοντες ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς τοῦτον τὸν λόγον, ὃν λέγομεν, καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐπωδὴν, εὐλαβούμενοι πάλιν ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς τὸν παιδικὸν τε καὶ τὸν τῶν πολλῶν ἔρωτα.

But if the poet [cannot give an apology], my dear companion, then we must behave just as those who have once fallen in love with someone but realize that the love is not beneficial and hold themselves back, even by force... so long as she [poetry] cannot make a defense for herself, we will listen to her while chanting (ἐπάδειν) this λόγος of ours over ourselves and reciting this soothing incantation (ἐπωδή), taking care not to fall back into the childish love of the many.

The danger of engaging with mimetic poetry, in the Platonic framework, is thus likened to contracting an unhealthy erotic attachment. The kind of desire that issues forth from *mimesis* is a childish obsession, which can consume the viewer with deception.

Moreover, the defective offspring from this kind of association is precisely what Plato worries about at the conclusion of the *Phaedrus*, too, in a passage where he likens written speeches to painting in their monolithic semiosis – a passage, one could argue, that represents a clear intratext in the Platonic corpus to *Republic* 10.²⁹⁴ In a scene that has a great influence on Apuleius among other writers in the Second Sophistic,²⁹⁵ Socrates questions the value of written speeches by employing the analogy of painting (*Phaedrus*

²⁹⁴ One might point to a number of shared lexical and conceptual concerns between these two passages, although, to my knowledge, scholars have done little more than acknowledge particular word choices. Both scenes refer to *mimesis* with a key term of Democritean optics associated with the mirror, *εἶδωλον* (cf. *Rep.* 10.598b and *Phaedr.* 274dff.); both use the metaphor of offspring and lineage for the production of *mimesis*; and both compare painting with some form of verbal art. See Halliwell 1988, 116 *ad loc.* 597e3, where he refers to the *Phaedrus*' invocation of the metaphor of offspring. Halliwell 2002, however, makes no mention of a possible connection.

²⁹⁵ Many scholars have suggested, for instance, that the conclusion of the *Phaedrus* is an important intertext for the Prologue of the *Metamorphoses*, particularly with its play on oral and written communication. See Trapp 2001 for the most sustained argument. See also Thibau 1965; Dowden 2006. Kirichenko 2008 expands on Trapp's argument.

274dff.). ζωγραφία possesses the strange quality of producing “offspring” (τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα) that seem “as if they are alive” (ὥς ζῶντα), but ultimately cannot respond to questions or criticism. The analogy is then extended to written speeches (λόγοι), which also stand in solemn silence when faced with any criticisms of a hypothetical interlocutor. Speeches, therefore, trick their hearers into believing that they can think (δόξαις μὲν ἄν ὥς τι φρονοῦντας αὐτοῦς λέγειν), but when one interrogates them, they “signify only one and the same thing always” (ἐν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί).

If we return to Apuleius’ *laus speculi* in *Apologia* 14, I suggest that we have found not only the philosophical origins from which Apuleius developed his paradoxical erotic model for specular *mimesis* – though, we should note he does not follow Plato to his final assessment of it; we have also discovered a line that may be the very phrase Apuleius translates at the conclusion of chapter 14. After enumerating the many benefits of the metamorphic *mimesis* the *speculum* offers, Apuleius polishes off the first piece of his *laus speculi* with one final condemnation of the ‘plastic arts’:

non multa intercapedine temporis dissimile redditur et ritu cadaueris unum uultum et immobilem possidet.

In a small interval of time, [the mimetic representation] is rendered dissimilar, and in the manner of a corpse, possesses one motionless face.

We find out here why the mirror’s courtesan-fidelity is more desirable than the ‘plastic arts’: other modes of *mimesis* fix the object of depiction *ritu cadaveris* – “in the manner of a corpse”. What is at stake in *mimesis* is nothing less than mortification. Just as written speeches “signify one and the same thing *always*” (ἐν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί) according to the *Phaedrus*, all plastic media “possess one unchanging face” (*unum uultum et immobilem*) in Apuleus’ framework, which becomes dissimilar from the object

of the representation “in no time” (*non multa intercapedine temporis*). Both discussions of *mimesis* are, at the most basic level, concerned with the ability to register a change over time – in the case of Plato, the failure of *mimesis* to change in accordance with the needs of an interlocutor who wants to learn (i.e., to change internally), and in Apuleius’ case, the incapacity of a fixed representation to accurately portray its real object after external changes have inevitably occurred. Moreover, both scenes are figured in terms of life and death – in Plato, bastard children who only seem alive (but are actually dead, or at least not “ensouled”),²⁹⁶ and in Apuleius, a virtual death through artistic fixity.²⁹⁷ While no one to my knowledge has suggested it, it is quite possible that Plato is playing here with the etymological connection between σημαίνει and a σῆμα – the burial stone²⁹⁸: written down words, such as one sees on a σῆμα, may seem to speak but cannot truly answer a passerby. In any case, what we find in Apuleius is a mixture of terms that Plato has already explored in relation to *mimesis*: ability to respond to change in the viewer/listener, erotic desire for illegitimate love, and mortified representation.

While Apuleius seems to borrow the characterization of the *speculum* as a courtesan from Plato’s critique, strangely framing the erotic association in positive terms, it is also possible to see how Apuleius arrives at Platonic ideas by traveling over the

²⁹⁶ See *Phaedr.* 276a4: Τὸν τοῦ εἰδότος λόγον λέγεις ζῶντα καὶ ἔμψυχον, οὗ ὁ γεγραμμένος εἰδῶλον ἂν τι λέγοιτο δικαίως.

²⁹⁷ Too 1996, 135 reads *ritu cadaveris* as a reference to a kind of artistic death that occurs with fixing a representation in a static form: “...imitation is... a dangerous, even deadly, way of coming to terms with the world. Painting and sculpture produce immobile images, which Apuleius compares to a rigid death mask, cf. *ritu cadaveris unum vultum et immobilem*. The author suggests now that art is a device for murdering people, as it induces into its subjects, not the *rigor* of the three dimensional object which a painting is said to lack, but *rigor mortis*. Art annihilates the vitality of its subjects and transforms them into corpses”.

²⁹⁸ It would not be far fetched to question whether this phraseology in Latin could be a gloss on the Greek ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτὸν ἀεί, especially considering the connection between the verb σημαίνω and burial stones (σῆμα) which actually speak on behalf of a corpse. One need only perform a *TLG* search on σημαίνω and σῆμα in the *Anthologia Graeca* to see the importance of these terms in the epigrammatic tradition.

“bridge” of Latin literature, as I suggested in the introduction – in this case, through Ovid. If we return to the wording of the *laus speculi* and consider it in light of the collocation of erotic nodding (*nutus*), motion (*motus*), and emotional changes (*laetans*; *dolens*), it is difficult not to detect here a subtle allusion to Ovid’s Narcissus, who recognizes himself in the mirror through the reflexive correspondence of precisely these features (*Met.* 3.457-60):

cum risi, adrides; lacrimas quoque saepe notavi
me lacrimante tuas; nutu quoque signa remittis
et, quantum motu formosi suspicor oris,
verba refers aures non pervenientia nostras!

Whenever I smile, you smile in response; and I have often noticed tears on your cheeks when I am crying. To my nod, you respond with signs of recognition; and as I suspect from the movement of your beautiful lips, you answer my words as well, but with words that do not reach my ears.

Here, too, the mirror’s signifier is a responsive nod to its man (*nutus*; cf. *ad omnem nutum hominis sui*) and a *mimesis* of an erotic motion (*motus*); and here, the recognition of the self in the mirror is brought about through corresponding emotional reactions – namely, laughing and crying (*cum risi...lacrimante*), similar to Apuleius’ delighting and grieving (cf. *laetantis vel dolentis*) – with both scenes relating stories of men “faring well or badly” (ἢ εὖ...ἢ κακῶς πεπραγέναι) and as a consequence, “grieving or rejoicing” (ἢ λυπουμένους ἢ χαίροντας), exactly as Socrates defined poetic *mimesis* in *Republic* 10. Of course, these diachronic changes registered in the *speculum*, which first bring about Narcissus’ recognition of himself in fulfillment of Tiresias’ prophecy (*Met.* 2.248: *si se non noverit*), serve as the catalyst for his final metamorphosis into the flower. Therefore, the *speculum* not only registers change over time, but even enacts it. As Shadi Bartsch has recently suggested, Tiresias’ prophecy itself may be considered an ironic play on the

philosophical strand of the γνῶθι σεαυτόν tradition, which Ovid inherits directly from Plato's *Phaedrus*.²⁹⁹ Narcissus gazing upon his lover in the mirroring water echoes the intersubjective encounter between lover and beloved in the *Phaedrus*, where the eyes are mirrors of the soul, proffering self-knowledge as well as transcendent experience. However, what we should especially take note of in these lines of the Narcissus episode is how catoptric *mimesis*, with its ability to register the nod (*nutus*) and motion (*motus*) of its man, leads to an erotic longing for *verba* to reach the ears (3.462: *verba...aures ...pervenientia nostras*). Even if the ears are less trustworthy than the eyes – a phrase Herodotus' Candaules famously coined and Lucian's ἕτερος λόγος quoted – the reflection of erotic motions is not enough for Narcissus: he needs the *verba* to assure him of erotic reciprocity. Thus, while the philosophical underpinnings of Apuleius' representational preference can be traced back to Plato, they are nonetheless mediated through Ovid's own engagement with Plato, as it were.³⁰⁰ We see in Ovid a longing for a verbal exchange of the sort that the *Phaedran* Socrates laments is missing from fixed forms of *mimesis* writ large; and we see Apuleius, in turn, allude to a tradition of playing with Plato through subtle word choices that signal a Narcissan kind of delusion.

If we return once again to the peculiar elements that Apuleius claims are lacking from other mimetic media – *vigor*, *color*, and *rigor* – there are a number of paradoxes in their uses as art-critical terms of representational success, which also point to Apuleius'

²⁹⁹ See Bartsch 2006, 84 says of this “[story] of reflection gone awry”: “it seems clear that...[Ovid] had the *Phaedrus* in mind...in treating the triad of mirrors, eros, and self-knowledge, [he] clearly had cause to reflect on a text whose popularity and influence are well documented for the centuries before and after”.

³⁰⁰ For the view that Ovid's Narcissus and Pygmalion episodes represent anti-Platonic statements on aesthetics, particularly in response to *Republic* 10, see Rosati 1983. However, understood in light of a more nuanced approach to Plato's view of *mimesis* (such as, e.g., in Halliwell 2002), we might rather say that these Ovidian episodes function as narrative re-workings of Platonic concerns with the problems of *mimesis*.

preference for verbal over visual *mimesis*. Consider, for instance, *vigor* – the missing element that deprives clay of its mimetic naturalism – in the literary tradition. We may note that it is rarely applied to inanimate or artistic objects in Latin literature, and thus, has a rather strange resonance here. Indeed, only in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural Histories* is *vigor* used of stones, particularly precious stones; and in context, the word describes the way in which certain stones interact with light and change color under the sun.³⁰¹ In fact, *vigor*, much like *fides*, is a term applied not to ‘plastic’ representation, but to physical and mental processes – as, e.g., in *vigor animi*.³⁰² Under this semantic heading, *vigor* can be a descriptive word for “lively” rhetoric: in the preface to Seneca the Elder’s *Controversiae* 10, the narrator speaks of “the color of ancient oratory, and the vigor of new” (*color orationis antiquae, vigor novae*); and Seneca the Younger, in discussing the writings of Fabianus, uses exactly the same construction as Apuleius to express what rhetorical quality is lacking in them – *deest illis oratorius vigor* (*Ep.* 100.8; cf. *deest enim...luto vigor*). In Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, on the other hand, *vigor* and its cognates are employed to describe the “vigorousness” of sexual appetite aroused by wine and seduction in the tryst between Lucius and Photis. At 2.11, Lucius says:

Vinum istud hodie sorbamus omne, quod nobis restinguat pudoris ignaviam et alacrem vigorem libidinis incutiat.

We should drink up all this wine today so that it may extinguish the cowardice of our modesty and stir up the speedy *vigor* of our lust.

³⁰¹ At *Nat. Hist.* 9.109, Pliny discusses how marvelously pearls change color and “grow ruddy in the sun and lose their brightness just like the human body” (sole rufescere candoremque perdere ut corpus humanum). But even the deep-sea pearls, which do not see the sun, become yellow over time, and lose the vigor that they once had in their youth (*nec nisi in iuventa constat ille qui quaeritur vigor*). Alternatively, in book 37, where Pliny discusses precious gems, he describes a certain kind of stone called a *sandastros*, which “tinges objects placed next to it with a certain vigor” (37.101: *quidam vigor adposita tinguens*).

³⁰² See the examples in *OLD* 1a. Cf. Apuleius’ *DDS* 3.26, where he uses the phrase *vigor animi* precisely to describe the mental energy required of wise men to comprehend divine things.

And as the sexual tension rises between Lucius and Photis, he claims to have “vigorously stretched his bow” (*Met.* 2.16: *arcum meum et ipse vigorate tetendi*) to a very taut point. Beyond vigorous sexual activity, though, *vigor* is one of the pleasing elements of the lively dance that Minerva’s cortege performs in Lucius’ *ekphrasis* of the Judgment of Paris in *Met.* 10: the war song that members of her troop sang “stir[s] up the *vigor* of their swift dance” (*saltationis agilis vigorem suscitabat*). Therefore, while the semantic range of the verb insofar as it relates to *mimesis* concerns a certain kind of verbal activity (*oratorius vigor*),³⁰³ Apuleius uses it in relation to movement, and in particular, erotic movement (*alacrem vigorem libidinis*).

Color, which is missing from statuary, presents another interesting term – in this case, an art critical term that has both elegiac and diachronic associations attached to it. Though statuary (*saxum*) lacks *color* in Apuleius, there is actually a tradition of discussing the variegated *colores* of painting: according to Pliny the Elder, Apelles had a special varnish for his paintings that offered an especially life-like verisimilitude³⁰⁴; and the well-known color work of Apelles gets taken up as an elegiac trope,³⁰⁵ in, e.g., Propertius, who describes beautiful female mythological *exempla* as follows in 1.2.21-2:

sed facies aderat nullis obnoxia gemmis,
qualis Apelleis est color in tabulis.

³⁰³ An instance of this kind of verbal *vigor* also occurs in one of the adultery tales of the *Met.*: in the Barbarus-Arete episode, after the cuckolded husband discovers a young man’s slippers under his bed, he drags his servant – the one known for his “particular fidelity” (*praecipua fidelitas*) – into the public square, and the young adulterer attacks him for stealing his slippers; Barbarus, “elated by the deception of the vigorous youth” (*Met.* 9.21: *fallacia vigorati iuvenis...immo sublatus*), lapsed (*delapsus*) into credulity. This usage would likely fall under the category of mental ingenuity (*vigor animi*).

³⁰⁴ See Pliny *Nat. Hist.* 35.97. That Apuleius knew of this tradition is clear from his claim about Alexander in *Florida* 7 (see n. 306 below).

³⁰⁵ See Sharrock 1991.

But their appearance was not dependent on any gems,
(and they had) a such color as is in the paintings of Apelles.

It is this trope that enables Apuleius elsewhere to use *color* as a metonymy for painting, as he does in the *Florida* when describing Alexander's refusal to allow any visual representation of himself.³⁰⁶ Even the elegiac undertones of a maiden's colorful flush make their way into lofty epic, which, as Alison Sharrock suggests, explains Vergil's description of Lavinia:

Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
siquis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
alba rosa: talis virgo dabat ore colores.

As when someone has dyed Indian ivory with the purple of blood,
or when white lilies grow red, mixed with many a rose,
such were the colors the maiden revealed on her face.

The color blend on the maiden's face, which Sharrock tentatively suggests is an intertext for Ovid's Pygmalion episode (to be discussed shortly), depicts Lavinia in art-critical terms – as “another ‘painted lady’ ... an object to be fought over, and ... an art-object the *sight* of which inflames Turnus.”³⁰⁷ Thus, *color*, in addition to its value as an art-critical term, has a certain erotic and particularly elegiac valence.

But this is not its only value in connection with a discussion of *mimesis*. *Color* – like the Greek term χρῶμα (see n. 272 above) – is also an important rhetorical term, one that could be applied both to stylistic and flowery rhetorical constructions as well as verbal decorations for narrative history. Thus, Quintilian speaks of “extemporaneous color” (*Inst. Orat.* 10.6.5: *extemporalis color*) of speech striking a rhetorician “in the

³⁰⁶ See *Fl.* 7: *sed edixit uniuerso orbi suo, ne quis effigiem regis temere adsimularet aere, colore, caelamine, quin saepe scripsit, solus eam Polycletus aere duceret, solus Apelles coloribus deliniaret, solus Pyrgoteles caelamine excuderet.*

³⁰⁷ Sharrock 1991, 44 (her italics).

midst of speaking” (*inter dicendum*), and Catulus in Cicero’s *de Oratore* questions Lucius Coelius Antipater’s influence on narrative history on the grounds that he “did not distinguish history neither with his variety of colors nor with his arrangement of words” (*de Orat.* 2.54: *sed iste ipse Caelius neque distinxit historiam varietate colorum neque verborum conlocatione*). Perhaps most relevant, the *color* of speech is a metaphor borrowed from painting and applied both to oratorical and poetic speech in Crassus’ explication of the rules of embellishment: *oratio* is “adorned...as if with a certain color and life-blood of its own” (*de Orat.* 3.96: *ornatur...quasi colore quodam et suco suo*), and the immediate pleasure we receive from it is greater because of the floridity of *color* – a fact which explains why *novae picturae* please us more than *antiquae tabulae*³⁰⁸; however, without variation (*sine varietate*) or a cessation of words (*sine intermissione*), a piece of writing, whether poetry or prose (*de Orat.* 3.100: *vel poesis vel oratio*), will not please the listener for long, “even if it is painted with the brightest colors” (*quamvis claris sit coloribus picta*).

If *color*, by virtue of its semantic value as an art critical term, can also be applied to the verbal arts, then I suggest that the mirror’s ability to register this mimetic virtue (as is implied in *Apol.* 14) again reveals how specular representation serves as a veiled preference for the imaginative and erotic power of the word – just as we saw with *fides* above. Indeed, *color* is precisely the element that furnishes diachrony to Photis’ catoptric hair (*Met.* 2.9): in Lucius’ encomium of Photis’ *capillus*, which we shall analyze more fully in chapter 3, he strangely likens it to a *speculum* because it changes color over time.

³⁰⁸ See *de Orat.* 3.98: *Quanto colorum pulcritudine et varietate floridiora sunt in picturis novis pleraque quam in veteribus!*

Part of the pleasure of looking at hair throughout the *Metamorphoses* (and precisely what is missing from Apuleius' hair in the *Apologia*) is its waving and undulant motion,³⁰⁹ which produces the optical illusions of color change and inspires erotic desire for narrative in the viewer. Considering the peculiarities of the two terms *vigor* and *color* in relation to mimetic verisimilitude, then, it is noteworthy that they are precisely the elements that Narcissus loses when he begins to waste away in front of the mirroring water. At *Met.* 3.491-3, the narrator explains:

Et neque iam color est mixto candore rubori,
nec vigor et vires et quae modo visa placebant,

His ruddy blush no longer had its *color* with whiteness mixed in,
Nor did he have his *vigor* and strength and all that was once pleasing to look at...

Color and *vigor* – the elements that the mirroring water once revealed (*modo visa*) to Narcissus – become by their very absence signs that a transformation is in the process of taking place. That Apuleius takes them to be necessary features of successfully naturalistic *mimesis* – and the very elements lacking in different types of sculpture – reenacts once again Ovid's engagement with questions about representation that go all the way back to Plato.

While *vigor* and *color* can be applied equally to visual and verbal *mimesis*, the element that Apuleius claims is missing from painting, *rigor*, would certainly be an odd virtue to espouse for the verbal arts. In fact, it turns out that it is not really a representational *virtue* at all. *Rigor* and its cognates appear in art historical treatments not of painting, but of statuary. In this realm of criticism, *rigor* describes not naturalistic or realistic three-dimensional art, but the early stages of sculpture, when the productions of

³⁰⁹ On this phenomenon in Apuleius, see Schmeling and Montiglio 2006.

artists had yet to achieve life-like verisimilitude. In Cicero's *Brutus*, for instance, the character Cicero discusses the statues of Canachus, which, he says, "are too rigid to imitate reality" (*Brut.* 70: *Canachi signa rigidiora esse quam ut imitentur veritatem*); as artistic method evolves, *signa* become softer (*molliora*), and thus, are better able to represent *veritas*. In a similar comparative treatment of the arts, Quintilian traces the evolution of statuary from the "hard" (*dura*) pieces of Callon and Hegesias to the "less rigid" (*minus rigida*) work of Calamis and the "still softer" (*molliora adhuc*) statues of Myron. It is very strange indeed not only that Apuleius applies *rigor* to painting, but also that he imagines it to be an operative feature in producing naturalistic verisimilitude, considering that it functions in precisely the opposite fashion in art critical discussions.

One final episode that may be at play here – in part because it is the textual mirror to Ovid's Narcissus, and in part because it is a quintessential scene in Latin literature for erotic and narrative imagination – is Ovid's Pygmalion.³¹⁰ As has already been suggested in the copious scholarship on this episode, Pygmalion-as-sculptor can be seen as an avatar for Ovid-as-poet, with Pygmalion representing the "creative artist *par excellence*".³¹¹ What is of particular interest to my investigation of Apuleius' courtesan-mirror is the way in which Ovid's Pygmalion episode invites the reader to participate in Pygmalion's erotic desire for his fantasy to become a reality.³¹² As such, it represents a

³¹⁰ See Rosati 1983 among others on the mirroring relationship between Narcissus and Pygmalion in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

³¹¹ See Anderson 1963, 25 for the phrase. See also Elsner 1991, 159: "[Ovid's version] turns Pygmalion into the supreme myth of the artist. He is the artist who makes his image so like life that in the end art becomes life. He is the artist – the one and only artist – to preserve his work in its pristine integrity of meaning, since he never lets go of it, never lets it into anyone else's sight".

³¹² Jaś Elsner was the first to read this scene through the desiring eyes of the reader: "...the invitation to the viewer in realistic art to become his own artist has been transformed by Ovid's text into an invitation to the

locus classicus for calling into question Platonic concerns over the deceptive and delusive effects of *mimesis* on viewers, listeners, and readers.³¹³ It is illustrative first to point out the opening exegetical comment Orpheus makes to the reader at 10.250-1:

virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas
et, si non obstat reverentia, velle moveri

She had the face of a true maiden, one which/who you would believe was alive,
and, if modesty did not object, would want to be moved/to move itself.

In this pseudo-*ekphrasis*, Orpheus-the-narrator incorporates the reader into the viewing experience with a 2nd-person singular generalizing subjunctive – a feature of *ekphrasis* we will see prominently on display in Lucius’ description of Byrrhena’s atrium. And the delusion Pygmalion experiences over the ontology of this statue is felt in the playful repetition of the root *ver-* of the adjective *verus*³¹⁴ as well as in the confused syntax of the line: is *virgo* or *facies* the antecedent of *quam*? Moreover, in this incorporation of the reader, the narrator also suggests with the ambiguity of the medio-passive meaning of *moveri* that this reader/viewer would desire for the statue to move in some way. Does the girl/appearance want “to move herself” or does she want “to be moved”? Both meanings have the same sexual undertones as Apuleius’ courtesan-*speculum*.³¹⁵ In addition to motion, the sign that Venus has granted Pygmalion’s wish for his ivory statue to become real comes in the form of softening *rigor*. That is, after Venus offers her divine nod (*amici numinis omen*) to Pygmalion – with the nod once again being a response that

reader to write his own version – his own fantasy – of the transgressive passion so brilliantly captured in the Pygmalion episode” (Elsner 1991, 164).

³¹³ See again Rosati 1983, according to whom this scene appears to offer a challenge to *Republic* 10.

³¹⁴ *ver-*: *verae...vivere...reverentia...moveri*. See Ahl 1985, 248 for the recognition of the wordplay; cf. Elsner 1991, 160 for further discussion.

³¹⁵ Adams 1982, 195 points out how *moveo* “(in the medio-passive) and some of its derivatives were applicable to sexual motions”. Cf. Feldherr 2010, 264.

registers his erotic desire – the ivory maiden is said to “grow soft” (*mollescit*) and to “set aside her *rigor* at the touch of [Pygmalion’s] fingers” (*positoque rigore/ subsedit digitis*). Then, the ivory maiden reciprocates Pygmalion’s love by changing color, “blushing” (*erubuit*) as he showers kisses on her, and she undergoes a *Phaedran* kind of visual experience – i.e., by “lifting up her...eyes to the eyes/stars” (293: *ad lumina lumen attollens*) and “seeing the eyes of her lover at the same time as she sees the sky” (*pariter cum caelo vidit amantem*).³¹⁶ It is no coincidence that, upon realizing that his erotic fantasy has been granted, Pygmalion does nothing other than “conceive of words” (*concipit.../verba*) to the goddess, a fact emphasized by enjambment.³¹⁷

Thus, in a quintessential moment in Latin literature concerning the appropriate aesthetic and erotic responses to art – one that could be seen either as a confirmation of or a challenge to Platonic concerns about *mimesis* – we encounter yet another competition between the visual and the verbal over representing the real and fulfilling the erotic imagination. Once again, the elements at play are motion, color change, reciprocation (or what we might call mirroring), a softening of *rigor*, and a verbal response. If we are to accept Andrew Feldherr’s reading of this scene, moreover, the text leaves us in an aporetic state, questioning whether the statue actually came to life or whether she just “seemed to” (*visa*); and by extension, it leaves us asking whether Pygmalion really had

³¹⁶ I do not know if anyone has suggested another kind of allusion to the *Phaedrus* in this scene, parallel to the Narcissus episode, but it seems to be yet another play on the eye-to-eye interaction of lover and beloved in *Phaedrus* 255c1ff. In that scene, there is both a sublimation and a reciprocation of erotic desire, and the intersubjective encounter between the mirroring eyes proffers a transcendent kind of knowledge.

³¹⁷ See Feldherr 2010, 265 n. 43: “Still problematic is the question of whether any real subjectivity can emerge from the ivory maiden other than the projection of the viewer/maker’s fantasy. In this connection, it is interesting to note Ovid’s treatment of the third traditional element in the animation of statues, speech. The ivory maiden remains mute throughout; as Pygmalion’s creation, she never gets the chance to speak, but at the very moment of the change, Pygmalion himself suddenly begins to speak, an act ‘pregnantly’ described as ‘conceiving words’ (*concipit/verba*, 290-1 – emphasized by enjambment)”.

his wish fulfilled or whether he merely descended further into a state of delusion. Thus, Feldherr concludes:

How then, to summarize, does the story comment on the act of viewing visual representations, and how does it link that experience to the reception of the text? It articulates for its reader a set of alternatives for responding to the ivory maiden, assent to illusion and an awareness of artifice, making both available to its reader without unequivocally either exulting in the powers of illusion...or providing a cold shower in the form of a reminder of the limits of art.³¹⁸

Put simply, the Ovidian narrator, in this pseudo-ekphrastic text, incorporates us into his text through the traditional rhetorical-poetic techniques, and then gives us a choice as to the appropriate response to aesthetic illusion, putting the onus of deciding on the reader.

I have suggested in this section that Apuleius' courtesan mirror provides, in fact, an ideal metaphor for the temporality of narrative and its ability to inspire "autonomous imaginative activity" in the viewer. After all, if we return again to Apuleius' paradoxical notion of *fides*, in sexual terms, a prostitute could represent erotic imagination, considering she does whatever the lover wants, literally responding to his every nod. That is, in the sexual encounter with a prostitute – much like in Pygmalion's rather disturbing tactile manipulation of his beloved – the customer uses the woman or pathic man as an object of his imagination, a vehicle of wish-fulfillment. In the next section, we will turn to Lucius' *ekphrasis* of a statuary group in Byrrhena's atrium. There, I argue that the same terms of erotic imagination are played out in bringing a scene of heightened naturalistic realism to life through verbal description. And I propose that we as readers are left in the same kind of conundrum, deciding whether to allow ourselves to participate

³¹⁸ Feldherr 2010, 269.

in Lucius' pleasure and delusion or whether to step back and reconsider our own attachment to this text.

Metamorphoses 2.4: Turning "Bodies in Space" into "Actions in Time":

If we turn now to the *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena's atrium in *Met.* 2.4, I suggest that we see a similar connection between motion over time, catoptric *mimesis*, and erotic fantasy. The mirroring water into which we are exhorted to gaze seems to add the finishing touches to an already "pregnant moment", furnishing a temporal narrative to an otherwise fixed scene. As Lucius enters Byrrhena's house, already excited for illicit sights, he offers a cinematic description of her atrium:

Ecce lapis Parius in Dianam factus tenet libratam totius loci medietatem, signum perfecte luculentum, ueste reflatum, procursu uegetum, introeuntibus obuium et maiestate numinis uenerabile; canes utrimquesecus deae latera muniunt, qui canes et ipsi lapis erant; his oculi minantur, aures rigent, nares hiant, ora saeuiunt, et sicunde de proximo latratus ingruerit, eum putabis de faucibus lapidis exire, et in quo summum specimen operae fabrilis egregius ille signifex prodidit, sublatis canibus in pectus arduis pedes imi resistunt, currunt priores.

Pone tergum deae saxum insurgit in speluncae modum muscis et herbis et foliis et uirgulis et sicubi pampinis et arbusculis alibi de lapide florentibus. Splendet intus umbra signi de nitore lapidis. Sub extrema saxi margine poma et uuae faberrime politae dependent, quas ars aemula naturae ueritati similes explicuit. Putes ad cibum inde quaedam, cum mustulentus autumnus maturum colorem adflauerit, posse decerpi, et si fontem, qui deae uestigio discurrens in lenem uibratur undam, pronus aspexeris, credes illos ut rure pendentes racemos inter cetera ueritatis nec agitationis officio carere. Inter medias frondes lapidis Actaeon simulacrum curioso optutu in deam proiectus iam in ceruum ferinus et in saxo simul et in fonte loturam Dianam opperiens uisitur.

And behold, Parian stone fashioned into a Diana occupied in balance the middle of the whole area, a very brilliant statue, with its garment blowing in the wind, vividly running forward, coming to meet those who entered and venerable with the majesty of a divinity. Dogs guarded the flanks of the goddess on either side, and the dogs themselves were also made of stone. Their eyes were

threatening, their ears stiff, their nostrils flared, and their mouths were raging, and if any barking burst in from nearby, you would think that it came from the stone's jaws – and the aspect in which that excellent sculptor exhibited the greatest proof of his craftsmanship – with the dogs lifted high so as to show their breast, their hind feet stood firm, but their front feet were running.

Behind the back of the goddess, the rock rose in the manner of a cave, with moss, grass, leafage, twigs, and here vines and there little trees all blossomed out of the stone. Inside, the statue's shadow glistened from the sheen of the stone. Under the very edge of the rock, apples and skillfully polished grapes hung down, which art vying with nature displayed resembling reality. You might think that certain things from there could be plucked for food, when the wine-bringing autumn breathes the ripe color on them, and if you bend over and look down into the fountain that runs along by the goddess' feet rippling into a gentle wave, you will believe that those clusters, hanging there as if in the country, do not lack the function of motion, among other aspects of verisimilitude. In the middle of the stone's foliage, a statue of Actaeon is seen, leaning over with a curious gaze towards the goddess, already becoming wild, turning into a stag and awaiting Diana about to bathe in the rock and in the fountain.

At the outset of a treatment of this passage, it seems fitting to point out that there remains no corresponding statuary ensemble of this size and/or detail in the extant visual repertoire. As Niall Slater has convincingly shown, this scene weaves together a pastiche of motifs from Pompeian wall paintings and statuary groups of Diana-Actaeon, none of which precisely correspond to the dimensions or scale of this atrium.³¹⁹ The closest analogue in the material remains is the famous Lanuvium Actaeon, which displays a life-sized statue of an untransformed Actaeon, holding a deerskin and being attacked by dogs.³²⁰ However, we know of other statuary scenes of a nearly comparable scale and level of detail, such as the Punishment of Dirce from the Baths of Caracalla – now housed in the archeological museum in Naples; there, the viewer can even decipher

³¹⁹ See, e.g., Slater 1998, 27: "While no set of surviving artifacts precisely represents this sculptural group, a number of pieces of Roman art can help us see what might have been in the author's mind. At the same time, we must keep in mind that Apuleius is not merely a reporter here, but may be playing some very interesting games with the nature of artistic representation and particularly point of view".

³²⁰ The next closest, which represent similar stand-alone pieces, are partial statues of Diana the Huntress and Actaeon being attacked (see Slater 1998, 30-1).

bunches of grapes and foliage carved into the base, just as Apuleius describes in this *ekphrasis*. Taking this into consideration, we may suggest that Apuleius constructs through *ekphrasis* a grand scale statuary scene of an episode that did not appear in the visual repertoire, but expands the boundaries of imaginative potential and by doing so, twists the plausible. Just as Philostratus would later show us a scene from tragedy that is not shown in tragedy, and then exhort the reader to look at it “as a painting/*ekphrasis*” (ὥς γραφήν), Apuleius demonstrates just how capable he is at conjuring up images in the imagination through word-painting. Moreover, the fact that we see two distinct visual traditions in this statuary episode – with Diana transforming from the “Striding Diana” to the “Bathing Diana” through the medium of the mirroring water³²¹ – only further demonstrates the *speculum*’s magic potential for imaginative narrative retellings. From the Platonic perspective, it adds a particularly ironic twist that Apuleius has taken a grand scale scene, which we have extant in painting (i.e., two-dimensional media), cast it into an expansive statuary ensemble akin to the Punishment of Dirce (i.e., three-dimensional media), and then focalized it through a catoptric medium in motion, thus playing with dimensionality.³²² It represents a peculiar challenge to the Platonic criticism of *mimesis* in *Republic* 10 that shows just how pleasurable all these deceptive media can be, especially when narrated in words.

The first half of this description depicts a scene of particularly impressive artistic

³²¹ Schlam 1984 was the first to demonstrate the conflations of traditions, though he does not trace the metamorphosis of tradition to the *speculum*.

³²² A similar point (albeit without reference to Plato) is made in Slater 1998, 46: “Our exploration of the visual arts in Apuleius has shown how deftly he can manipulate the inheritance of the art historical tradition for his own literary purposes. He plays with iconographic elements to animate them, transferring elements from two-dimensional to three-dimensional representation or putting two different Venus statues in motion...” That these iconographic elements and the interplay with dimensionality can be reduced to fundamentally Platonic concerns about *mimesis* has yet to be noticed.

realism in the expected mode of a poetic *ekphrasis*. It opens with a traditional technique of focalization to direct the reader's attention, *ecce* – a phenomenon similar to what Norman Bryson has labeled the “Philostratean ‘Look!’”.³²³ And the narrator further incorporates the reader into the description with a series of 2nd person singular verbs³²⁴: if any barking comes forth, “you will think” (*putabis* – note the future indicative) paradoxically that it comes “from the jaws of the stone” (*de faucibus lapidis*). Here, it is the eyes – the more trustworthy of the senses, according to Herodotus and the Second Sophistic tradition of quotation – that trick the ears into hearing sounds coming from inanimate material.³²⁵ Even this illusion of apparent sound and motion – the barking, the seeming motivity of the statue with its refluent robe – highlights the problems of intermediality: the narrator reminds us time and again that we are looking at *lapis*, even as he describes how it seems to step out of its still life. However, Lucius-auctor is sure to remind us also that this is “art emulating nature” (*ars aemula naturae*), that art “arranged” (*explicare*) the natural setting so as to show things that seem *veritati similes*.

The juxtaposition between art and nature – a feature of *mimesis* highlighted in the opening of the *laus speculi* of *Apologia* 14 – is not only a classic trope of Ovidian ekphrastic scenes, but is an even more commonly invoked *topos* of Early Imperial and

³²³ Bryson 1994, 266 (*et passim*): “Frequently met with, in the *Imagines*, is a textual moment at which the description at last feels its own language to dissolve into the light of the scene it opens upon. This is the Philostratean ‘Look!’...After his exclaimed ‘For look!’, the description at last reaches the moment of life-off”.

³²⁴ On the proliferation of second person verbs in *ekphrasis*, see Bartsch 2007, 83. A practitioner of rhetorical *ekphrasis* could employ a number of methods to incorporate a reader into the act of ‘viewing’ the imagined scene in order to accomplish what Aelius Theon suggests is the goal of *ekphrasis*: “Ἐκφρασις ἐστὶ λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ’ ὅπιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον (*Progymnasmata* 118.6-20). Cf. Webb 1999; Webb 2009. Importantly for us, phrases like ‘one would have said’ or ‘you would think’ are “a standard ekphrastic marker, hypothesising a viewer taken in by the illusion” (Whitmarsh 2002, 114). On incorporation of the viewer in Hellenistic art and poetry, see Zanker 2004.

³²⁵ Hearing sounds from scenes of ‘plastic’ art in *ekphrasis* is a phenomenon that Andrew Laird has helpfully labeled “disobedient *ekphrasis*” (Laird 1993).

Second Sophistic literature. As has long been noted in Apuleius scholarship, the grove where Actaeon's *error* takes place in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is so beautiful that the narrator, in describing it, declares: "nature simulated art with her talent" (*simulaverat artem ingenio natura suo*) – the precise opposite of Apuleius' marble grove.³²⁶ And one of the most famous art-critical passages from antiquity is the anecdote from Pliny's *Natural Histories* about the competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasius over artistic skill in producing mimetic realism (*Nat. Hist.* 35.64-6)³²⁷: Zeuxis, so the story goes, produced a painting of grapes so realistic (*uvas pictas tanto successu*) that he tricked some birds to fly down and eat them; Parrhasius, in turn, made a curtain of such life-like verisimilitude (*veritate repraesentata*) that he even deceived (*fefelliset*) Zeuxis, who asked him to draw the curtain back; Zeuxis, acknowledging his *error*, then conceded the palm to Parrhasius for accomplishing the feat of deceiving not only birds, but an *artifex*. It is likely no coincidence, then, that the pinnacle of artistic deception in Apuleius' *ekphrasis* – at least, before we view the scene through the mirror – is a bunch of highly realistic grapes: *uuuae faberrime politae*. The first half of Lucius' *ekphrasis* represents an artistic feat of Zeuxis' caliber, or so the polished grapes seem to signal.

³²⁶ See, e.g., van der Paardt 2004, 29: "When Apuleius has Lucius describe the *antrum* of Diana he adds something to the usual items in this respect, viz. delicious fruit, *poma et uvae*..., *quas ars aemula nature veritati similes explicuit*. That is the very opposite of what we read in Ovid's version. The explanation for this contrast-imitation is obvious: Ovid evoked a piece of nature so beautiful that it resembled art, Apuleius evoked a work of art so beautiful that it resembled nature. There can be no doubt that Apuleius intentionally varied here, in the description of the *antrum*, a symbol of (making) poetry, his Ovidian example".

³²⁷ Norman Bryson, who opens his seminal book on the Gaze with this passage, notes: "The enduring relevance of Pliny's anecdote is remarkable: indeed, unless art history finds the strength to modify itself as a discipline, the anecdote will continue to sum up the essence of working assumptions still largely unquestioned. The Plinian tradition is a long one" (Bryson 1983, 1).

That this motif of naturalistic deception was soon connected to the tricks that mirrors play on viewers is evidenced by the fact that Philostratus' Narcissus- *ekphrasis* in the *Imagines* plays a game with the reader that echoes Pliny's anecdote³²⁸: the painting (γραφὴ) of Narcissus, because it "honors the truth" (τιμῶσα...τὴν ἀλήθειαν), so realistically depicts flowers on which a bee has lighted that it is unclear whether a real bee has been "deceived by the painting" (ἐξαπατηθεῖσα ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς), or whether we, the viewers, are deceived into thinking that a painted bee is real (ἡμᾶς ἐξαπατῆσθαι χρὴ εἶναι αὐτήν). In offering an exegesis of this phenomenon, the sophist-narrator makes explicit the one-to-one correspondence between the deceptions of artistic realism and the delusion Narcissus undergoes vis-à-vis the *speculum* by leaving off his address to the reader and turning to the painted Narcissus: "As for you, Narcissus, it is no painting that has deceived you" (σὲ μέντοι, μειράκιον, οὐ γραφή τις ἐξηπάτησεν). Of this method of incorporating the reader, Jaś Elsner notes:

If we are deceived by a painted bee, then our desire as beholders is – like that of Narcissus – sufficient to make the reflection seem real...as it is, the sophist does not know whether or not the bee is real. He (and we, his addressees) are caught in a version of the spell-bound fascination that grips Narcissus gazing into the pool. The dynamics of desire between Narcissus the painted viewer and the pool have transcended the painting's frame and rest firmly in us as we attempt to relate with the painting.³²⁹

As I suggested above, it is the first half of Apuleius' *ekphrasis* that plays similar games with the agonistic relationship between art and nature. Through the recurring reference to *lapis*, the speaker reminds us time and again that we are gazing upon a *marble* scene of particular mimetic realism. It is not Diana, but *lapis Parius in Dianam*

³²⁸ On the resemblance of this scene to Pliny's Zeuxis and Parrhasius competition, see Elsner 1996a, 253. For a fuller reading of the anecdote, see Elsner 1991, 61-2.

³²⁹ Elsner 1996a, 253.

factus that graces the middle of the atrium.³³⁰ The words used of this statuary scene, moreover, vividly evoke movement and motion, while many of them still possess the semantic range to describe fixed rock.³³¹ The marble clothing is blowing in the wind and the statue is “lively” (*vegetus*) in its step. The fixed statue of Diana even comes to greet (*introeuntibus obuuium*) those who enter the atrium.³³² However, at the point when we start to believe the scene has come to life, with the dogs guarding the goddess, we are reminded again that we are looking at a “stone” display (*qui canes et ipsi lapis erant*). Many of the verbs used of Diana’s dogs have both a primary meaning that can be used of caves, rocks, and other fixed, natural phenomena, but also have a secondary meaning that is associated with action or movement (e.g. *muniunt, minantur, rigeo*).³³³ We may note,

³³⁰ We may contrast this, e.g., with the opening of Callistratus’ *Narcissus-ekphrasis*, which highlights how the person is made from rock (Νάρκισσος ἐκ λίθου πεποιημένος) rather than how the marble is made into a person. What is the essential substance of an artistic rendering? In Apuleius, it would seem to be the material rather than the object of the depiction. Freudenburg 2007, 242 reads Apuleius’ line as an example of the way in which our vision of the *ekphrasis* is refracted through Lucius’ “thunderstruck way of experiencing them, fired by curiosity, gullibility and desire. We see these artifacts not as they are, but through Lucius’ way of seeing the world, as a magical never-land where stones turn into things (*Ecce lapis Parius in Dianam factus*). To take this sight in is to momentarily feel his enchantment”. In the end, this notion is in part what I would like to expand on, namely that Lucius’ sight of the atrium somehow corrupts us into feeling the same affective response that Lucius has.

³³¹ While Paschalis 2002 is one of the more sensitive readings of this scene, I think he is incorrect in determining “the mechanisms through which the sculptural representation of Diana and Actaeon is perceived as a narrative sequence” (see p. 35). I do not actually disagree that it is a narrative sequence, but in my view, the scene acquires its final finish when it is mediated through the mirror, the agent of displaying diachronic change. The earlier part of the description thus emphasizes its fixity while only playing with categories of temporality.

³³² The same artistic realism recurs in the *ekphrasis* of Cupid’s palace, which many scholars have connected thematically with this *ekphrasis* (see, for instance, James 1987, 127-8; cf. Nethercut 1968). One of the many connections between the two scenes is a variation on this particular phrase *introeuntibus obuuium*; in Cupid’s palace, the wall reliefs of wild beasts and herds come to meet the gaze of those entering the palace (*haediis et id genus pecudibus occurrentibus ob os introeuntium*).

³³³ Paschalis (2002) 136 is wrong to suggest that “the person who describes uses verbs which suggest a static rather than dynamic representation...” precisely because of the polyvalent semantic range of the verbs. *Munio* is of course etymologically derived from *moenia* (TLL ETYM.), but can (rarely) be used of *animantibus* (TLL I.A.1.a.β.13); cf. the *ekphrasis* of the theatrical scene of young boys guarding Minerva (*Met.* 10.31). *Minor* can be used in the literal sense (‘to jut forth, project’) of static objects, such as rocks or cliffs (see Verg. *Aen.* 1.162: *geminique minantur in caelum scopuli*; cf. *Sil.* 4.2), but is more often employed to depict threatening actions or movements (*OLD* 1.a and c). *Rigeo* primarily signifies stiffness

in particular, that this statuary ensemble does not lack *rigor*, since the dogs' ears "grow stiff" (*regent*) – though, we may recall from above that *rigor* was not a desirable quality for sculptural verisimilitude. The speaker reiterates the power of this *mimesis* by describing the "the aspect in which that excellent sculptor exhibited the greatest proof of his craftsmanship" (*summum specimen operae fabrilis egregius ille signifex*), namely the dual optical effect of simultaneous fixity and movement in the realism of the dogs' posture. We may compare this line with the elaborate and bombastic conclusion of the *laus speculi*, in which Apuleius explains how much "that skillful smoothness and artistic shine of a mirror surpass the representational arts in regard to returning similarity" (*tantum praestat imaginis artibus ad similitudinem referundam levitas illa speculi fabra et splendor opifex*).³³⁴ According to Apuleius' comparison of modes of *mimesis* in *Apologia* 14, this statuary scene should be subpar to the other, more mobile and brilliant mirroring, but this particular *ekphrasis* seems to contend quite fiercely with nature. Nonetheless, Apuleius emphasizes this scene's status as artistic deception by creating his own neologism, *signifex*: this is not the work of the specular *opifex*, nor even of an *artifex* like Zeuxis; it is made by a "statue-maker".³³⁵ Even after all of the interplay between reality and illusion in this first half of the *ekphrasis*, we are reminded with the phrase *ars aemula naturae* and the verb *explicare* that this is still merely highly naturalistic art and

or rigidity (*OLD* 1.a) and is often descriptive for *lapis* (*OLD* 1.b), but can be used, as it is here, for a fixed stare (*OLD* 1.c).

³³⁴ That these two passages are in conversation should be clear from the playful syllabic parallels, *signifex/opifex*, *fabra/fabrilis*, *specimen/speculi*, *operae/opifex*. It is as if Apuleius, in a challenge to the reader, compels us to look back and compare. Can this statuary scene move without a mirror? It is *almost* a perfect *mimesis*, but one element (which will appear at the end of the *ekphrasis*) is missing for the scene to come to life.

³³⁵ As far as I can tell, *signifex* is an Apuleian coinage, appearing only in *Met.* 2.4 and *de deo Socratis* 21. The only other attestation of this word is in Porphyry's commentary on Horace's *Epistulae*, which he uses to describe the famous sculptor Lysippus (*Comm. In Hor. Epist.* 2.1.239).

these are still only “bodies in space”.

However, as the focalization changes – as the speaker approaches closer to the figure of Diana, and then refocuses the reader’s attention on the mirroring water beneath her feet – the whole *ekphrasis* is transformed into a different scene from iconography, the “Bathing Diana.”³³⁶ The narrator says in yet another readerly incorporation – this time, in the subjunctive (*putes*) – “you would think certain pieces from there could be picked for food, when the wine-bringing autumn breathes a mature *color* into them” (*cum mustulentus autumnus maturum colorem afflaverit*). If we think back to the *laus speculi*, *color* was precisely the element lacking from *saxum* – and indeed, from statuary in general.³³⁷ It is lacking from this marble ensemble, too, at least until the reader is encouraged to imagine a color change in conjunction with a change in season (i.e., a change *over time*). Continuing to focalize the reader’s visual experience, Lucius-auctor claims, “if you bend over and look down into the fountain” (*si pronus aspexeris*), then “you will believe” (*credes*) that the scene “does not lack the function of motion” (*agitationis officio*). The *officium* of movement is a very odd way of phrasing the illusory narrative that the mirror offers: the water literally “does the work” of supplying narrative. In light of Apuleius’ courtesan-mirror of *Apologia* 14, moreover, it should be noted that

³³⁶ See again Schlam 1984.

³³⁷ Apuleius strangely seems to use *lapis* and *saxum* interchangeably for the material of this statuary scene. The whole ensemble, one would imagine, is made of the same material. While no Diana/Actaeon statuary scene of this size or magnitude exists in the extant visual repertoire (see discussion above), the Punishment of Dirce from the Baths of Caracalla is perhaps the closest *comparandum*, and that is made of a uniform material. Similarly, the first half of the *ekphrasis* is described as *lapis*; at the opening of the second paragraph, we hear of a “rock” (*saxum*) cave. The foliage of this cave is once again *lapis* – *inter medias fronds lapidis* – but the *simulacrum* of Actaeon is once again made of *saxum*.

officium has an erotic valence synonymous to *morigerus*, as J. N. Adams suggests.³³⁸ The *speculum* is once again demonstrating its courtesan-fidelity in receiving the gaze of the viewer and reflecting it back with a kind of added motivity that enacts a metamorphosis of the scene before the viewer's eyes.

As Lucius-actor walks closer to the statue and bends over the water, the reader's focus is shifted from the full scene to reflections of it in the water (*pronus aspexeris*: "if you look...").³³⁹ This *fons* is moving (*vibratur*), thereby adding the magical and metamorphic effect. It is at this moment that Actaeon appears as a *simulacrum* – a word that Wowerius deleted as an unnecessary gloss on *Actaeon*.³⁴⁰ In my view, however, *simulacrum* is there to add an ironic emphasis on the dual medium through which Actaeon is seen, *simulacrum* being a word for both a statue and a reflection in a mirror.³⁴¹ Actaeon is represented as a statue, to be sure; but the further Lucius leans *pronus* over the

³³⁸ In fact, the word *officium* seems to have developed into a double entendre for the passive partner in a homoerotic encounter. The sexual joke seems to have taken on a life of its own after the declaimer Haterius suggested that it was the *officium* of a freedman to be a lover to his patron: *impudicitia in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in liberto officium* (Sen. *Contr.* 4 *Praef.* 10). Of this double entendre, see Adams 1982, 163: "Because of the existing sexual use of *officium*, Haterius' remark was deliberately misconstrued, as if he were equating lexically *impudicitia* (i.e. pathic behavior) and *officium*. His unintentional double entendre gave rise in the rhetorical schools to a spate of puns, in which *officium* at one level meant 'duty,' but on another 'homosexual *patientia*'".

³³⁹ Cf. Winkler 1985, 168-9: "As the viewer's eye descends from column top to ground level, the contrast of rest/motion is picked up by that of rock/water".

³⁴⁰ See the *app. crit.* of Zimmerman 2012, *ad loc.*

³⁴¹ Apuleius uses this word almost uniformly to mean "statue", though *simulacrum* is the primary word for a specular reflection, as it is a translation of the Greek *eidōlon* in, e.g., Lucretius' *DRN*. See Bailey 1947, 1183 *ad. loc.* 30 for Lucretius' use of mirroring terms; cf. Hardie 1988 for discussion of the significance of this Lucretian word in Ovid's Narcissus episode. *Simulacrum* appears 26 times in the Apuleian corpus, 22 of which refer to a physical statue or a stand in for a divinity. Twice, the word refers to a ghostly vision (*Met.* 1.6; 8.12). Here is one of only two places where Apuleius plays with the dichotomy between statues and mirrors, in this case, by placing a statue (*simulacrum*) of Actaeon above a pool of water. The only other ambiguous case is at *Apol.* 42.21, in which the *simulacrum* appears as a vision of Mercury *in aqua* (i.e. from a mirroring medium); in this instance, however, the *simulacrum* is clearly not a reflection but an epiphany of a god like the *simulacrum* of Isis in *Met.* 11.3.

fons, the more likely it is that he (and we) see a *simulacrum* (“mirror-image”) of him.³⁴²

Moreover, as scholars have noted, Actaeon “is seen” (*visitur*) in the process of getting punished for a crime that he has not yet committed. Unlike in Ovid’s version, Apuleius’ Actaeon has not yet seen the naked goddess. Rather than an innocent wanderer (*error*) that happens upon a goddess bathing, this Actaeon is a voyeur, lying in wait (*opperiens*) to cast his “curious gaze” (*curiosus optutus*) upon the goddess,³⁴³ who, in turn, is “about to bathe” (*lotura*). That is, the whole Actaeon tradition has been transformed in the imaginative retelling through description.³⁴⁴ If we look at the wording, Actaeon’s punishment is *in the process* of taking place, as is marked by the temporal deictic *iam* and the durative phrase *in cervum*.³⁴⁵ In contrast to the “Striding Diana” at the

³⁴² Riefstahl 1938 was the first to note the one-to-one correspondence between Actaeon and Lucius. But Winkler cleverly connected this phenomenon to the reader looking together with Lucius: “That the second person is normal in such descriptions does not prevent its being used with playful attention to its significance. Since my estimate of Apuleius’s controlled gamesmanship is high and since I believe him to be maneuvering the reader into a dilemma to choose among interpretations, I think that *pronus aspexeris* should be fully visualized. If you *did* (his italics) lean forward to look into the water you would see not only a second Actaeon but yourself” (Winkler 1985, 170). Heath 1992 also shows further correspondences.

³⁴³ See Heath 1992 104 for discussion of Actaeon’s *curiosus optutus*. Cf. Slater 1998.

³⁴⁴ On this, see the comparative treatment of the myth of Heath 1992.

³⁴⁵ In my view, Paschalis 2002, 136ff. *et. al.* puts overly much emphasis on the completed aspect of the metamorphosis of the *simulacrum Actaeon* implied by this phrase: “...the person who describes turns the dynamic process of metamorphosis into an accomplished fact and hence into a static situation. *Iam in cervum ferinus* means that Actaeon ‘has already taken the shape of a beast.’ In other words, *iam* here marks not a beginning but a completed action, which is in addition rendered not with a participle but with an adjective... The choice of a synchronic (descriptive) over a diachronic (narrative) version is intended to render the visual text as faithfully as possible... artistic creation... and transformation... are perceived as accomplished facts and as having become ‘bodies in space’.” Cf. *GCA* 2001 *ad. loc.* and Callebat 1968, 229ff., whom Paschalis cites. Cf. also Sharrock 1996 who scans through the evidence of half metamorphosed Actaeon’s in the iconographic tradition. If we follow Paschalis’ suggestion that the metamorphosis has already been accomplished – for which, I think he leans too heavily on the completed aspect of the adjective *ferinus* (cf. *OLD* 3a: ‘having the form or nature of a wild beast’) – then it seems to deprive *in cervum* of a necessary temporal progression. Are we to assume not only that the punishment begins before the crime (as most commentators note), but also that it has been fully accomplished? This certainly does not match with the visual evidence, where there exists only one scene with the metamorphosis not in progress, but fully completed (see Sharrock 1996). Paschalis’ reading also puts strain on the future participle *lotura* because the sequence occurs in a narrative progression (i.e., Actaeon is transforming as he awaits the future sight) rather than a static and completed punishment before the crime. *Contra* Paschalis, Hanson 1989 translates the phrase “in the very act of changing into a stag” (p. 55).

beginning of the *ekphrasis*, where the material has been fashioned into the figure of the goddess – “stone made into a Diana” (*lapis in Dianam factus*) – Actaeon, simultaneously a person and a *simulacrum*, is undergoing his metamorphosis into a new figure (*in cervum*), which is dually represented both as a statue and in the mirroring water.³⁴⁶

Not only is Actaeon represented in the process of metamorphosis, but also, from the iconographic perspective, Diana is transformed in the reflections of the *speculum*.³⁴⁷ Just as the statue of Laocoon in Lessing’s framework can only signify ‘robe’ or ‘body’, but not both simultaneously, the “Striding Diana”, robed in a seemingly flowing garment, cannot signify the “Bathing Diana”, except when viewed through the mirror – or, when spoken of in words. The motive *speculum* – here, actually moving from the imaginary autumnal breeze (*afflaverit...vibratur*) – enacts the metamorphosis, and encourages Lucius (and the reader) to imagine the goddess “about to bathe” (*lotura*). While Lucius focalizes the “Bathing Diana” – standing over the water at an angle, presumably, where he would see not only Actaeon and Diana, but also *himself* in the water – the reader is seduced through ekphrastic description to “succumb to visualization”³⁴⁸ – or, to phrase it in terms of Lessing, to autonomously imagine the goddess undressing. Curiously, Actaeon himself leans over the goddess (*in deam proiectus*)³⁴⁹ in order to sate his

³⁴⁶ Schlam 1984, 105 takes *et in saxo simul et in fonte* with Actaeon and suggests a playful pun here: “The pun of *in fonte loturam* cannot be caught in English, since the ablative phrase, joined with *in saxo*, must be taken with *visitur* and refer to the reflection of Actaeon in the water.”

³⁴⁷ See esp. Schlam 1984. Cf. Slater 1998 on other possible iconographic intertexts. *GCA* 2001 *ad loc.* cites the iconography of Actaeon wearing a deerskin as a potential visual representation with which this *ekphrasis* engages.

³⁴⁸ The phrase comes from Whitmarsh 2002, 122, as noted above.

³⁴⁹ There is a textual problem at this point in the *ekphrasis* that offers the tantalizing possibility that Lucius is Actaeon. The manuscript reads *in deā tū^{su} proiectus*, where the *tum* is corrected *eadem manu* with *sum*. Syntactically of course, *sum* cannot be a correct emendation, for which reason there have been a myriad of conjectures (*susum*, *versum*, *suam deorsum*, *prorsum*, etc.) contingent on comparisons with scene paintings of Actaeon and Diana. But, Winkler has suggested that even in its textual corruption, the *Metamorphoses*

curiosus optutus at the very moment when Lucius (and by extension, the reader) leans over the mirroring water to see the goddess transformed.

Pronus – “leaning over” – has an added ironic valence, not only because Lucius himself will soon be bent over and looking down – i.e., as an ass destined to stare at the ground – but also because the word is erotic in tone³⁵⁰ and appears in many major sex and death scenes parallel to Lucius’ visualization of this atrium. For instance, when Psyche finally sees Cupid in book 5 and casts her glance upon his hair – which, I will argue in chapter 3, mirrors the *Haarspiegel* of Photis and Isis – she leans over him, gazing with insatiable desire (5.23: *prona in eum efflictim inhians*).³⁵¹ Moreover, in the kitchen seduction (2.7-10) only a few chapters after the *ekphrasis* in 2.4, Lucius leans over Photis – *pronus in eam* – trying to snatch open-mouthed kisses (*patentis oris*) from her, just as Psyche does with Cupid; Photis responds, in turn, with “unrestrained desire” (*prona cupidine*).³⁵² But perhaps the most resonant scene – since it reveals a character standing *pronus* and staring down into mirroring water – is the death of Socrates in book 1. There, Apuleius’ fan fiction Socrates, who has escaped to Thessaly to live a licentious life, stands in a *locus amoenus* reminiscent of the *Phaedrus* beside a gentle river (*lenis*

illuminates the synonymy between Lucius and Actaeon: the text at first appears to say, “I was hanging over the goddess as a *simulacrum* of Actaeon” (Winkler 1985, 170 n. 67).

³⁵⁰ See Adams 1982, 192.

³⁵¹ Braund 1999, 184 connects this phrase to Lucretius’ tableau of Mars and Venus in *DRN*, insofar as both depict a lover laying down with a beloved hanging over him: “Mars reclines horizontally (e.g. *reposita*, *resupini*) and gazes up, open-mouthed and greedy (*avidos*), at Venus. Psyche here mirrors him by leaning over (*prona*) Venus’ son Cupid and gazing down on him passionately (*efflictim*)”. I would suggest, however, that the primary textual mirrors are intratexts within the *Metamorphoses* (on which, see below).

³⁵² See *GCA* 2004, 287-8 *ad loc.* for a fuller analysis of the correspondences between Psyche’s vision of Cupid and Lucius’/Photis’ kitchen foreplay.

fluvius)³⁵³ – one that Aristomenes calls a *fons* and one that “rivals silver or glass in color” (*argento vel vitro aemulus in colorem*); having “greedily consumed” (*avide devoraverat*) an excessively large piece of cheese, he leans over the river – for which, Apuleius uses the *hapax legomenon*, *appronat* – to consume water greedily (*avidus*); at this point, he dies from having been stabbed in the throat earlier.

Wytse Keulen has noted the many correspondences between the description of Socrates’ death scene and Lucius’ *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena’s atrium: the “lightly” (*lenis*) flowing water,³⁵⁴ the suggestion of rivalry (*aemulus*) of media,³⁵⁵ and the strange usage of the verb *oppertus* with an accusative object (*oppertus paululum planiorem ripae marginem*).³⁵⁶ Add to that the fact that both Lucius/Actaeon/reader and Socrates stand *pronus* over the water, and we can tell that Apuleius meant for us to make this connection.³⁵⁷ Moreover, the “silvery-fountain” motif (*argenteus*) is reminiscent of the untouched *locus amoenus* of Narcissus, whose *fons* is “...inlimis, nitidis argenteus undis”.³⁵⁸ Indeed, though no one has pointed it out yet, both Socrates and Narcissus go to the fountain to sate a thirst (*Met.* 1.19: *sitire impatienter*; cf. *Met.* 3.415: *dumque sitim*

³⁵³ As Keulen points out, the presence of a plane tree (*platanus*) here “continues the homage to the Platonic locus amoenus, with the plane tree that had already been mentioned...and the clear river” (*GCA* 2007, 348 *ad loc.* 1.19.7).

³⁵⁴ *GCA* 2007, 350 *ad loc.* *lenis fluvius*.

³⁵⁵ *GCA* 2007, 351 *ad loc.* *argento...in colorem*: “The rivalry of natural water with silver or glass...is a reversal of the ekphrasis of the sculptures in Byrrhena’s atrium, which embody the topos of *ars aemula naturae*...Here, then, we have an example of the topos of *Natura Artifex*.”

³⁵⁶ *GCA* 2007, 353 *ad loc.* *oppertus*.

³⁵⁷ I must thank an audience member, Evelyn Adkins, at the “Sexuality in Ancient Art” panel at the 2016 Society for Classical Studies meeting, as she suggested this scene as a possible intertext.

³⁵⁸ See Bömer on Ovid’s *Met.* 3.407 for the Ovidian description. Cf. May 2013, 186 for the Apuleian appropriation of this motif.

sedare cupit, sitis altera crevit),³⁵⁹ just as Lucius himself begins the novel “thirsty for novelty” (*sititor alioquin novitatis*).

There is a rich interpretive joke, to be sure, in the fact that Apuleius’ Socrates returns to the *locus amoenus* of the *Phaedrus* and has a deadly, Narcissan encounter with a mirroring *fons*.³⁶⁰ If Ovid’s Narcissus is a reworking of themes from the *Phaedrus*, as Shadi Bartsch has recently shown,³⁶¹ and if Apuleius recognized it as such, then putting an over-sexed, gluttonous Socrates back in a *Phaedran* grove only to have him undergo a Narcissan catoptric encounter represents precisely the kind of deep (albeit serio-comic) engagement with Plato that I have been highlighting in this dissertation. But as we reflect further on this scene – one that is at first a joke, but becomes quite serious after we connect it to all its corresponding scenes of leaning and viewing – what does it mean for Lucius (and us) that he stands *pronus* over the water (and we over our texts) to catch a sight of the naked goddess, if we have already heard (or read) about Socrates leaning over a different *fons* and dying? John Heath, whose masterful reading of this scene demonstrates its value as a *mise-en-abyme* for the whole novel, suggests that the figure of Actaeon, book-ended by Socrates and Thelyphron, provides not only a warning to Lucius, who is “constantly threatened with an Actaeonic rending by dogs, wild beasts, and humans”,³⁶² but also a signal to the reader about “the necessity of re-interpretation in

³⁵⁹ It should be noted that Merkel deleted this line from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* as an interpolation; but if it is, it is likely an ancient interpolation, perhaps in the manuscript already by the time of Apuleius. See, e.g., the discussion of Tarrant 1987.

³⁶⁰ Even Socrates’ corpse is buried beside the river, left to decompose into foliage, just like Narcissus’ body, which is transformed into a flower beside the river.

³⁶¹ Bartsch 2006, 84-103.

³⁶² Heath 1992, 110.

general”.³⁶³ That the ensemble in the atrium proffers an immediate warning to Lucius about dangers he will endure is, no doubt, one of the powerful hermeneutic purposes of this passage *within* the novel; the way in which Lucius-*actor* misses the point, as it were, and rushes off to see a witch disrobe and perform magic is precisely the kind of game that Apuleius plays with the reader, as Winkler, Heath’s teacher, famously demonstrated in his *Auctor et Actor*.

But the reason that Socrates frantically runs over to the *fons* in the *locus amoenus*, disrupting the leisurely setting for which the original scene is so well-known with a violent end,³⁶⁴ is to clear his throat because he – like Lucius at the opening of the novel – has consumed far too much cheese.³⁶⁵ In fact, in all of these cases of erotic leaning, it is an excessive desire for consumption – consumption of food, of sex, and/or of sights – that drives characters to lean over. The inevitable result is either death or stupefied statuization. If we link all of these correspondences – Socrates and Lucius as consumers in book 1, the death-bringing mirror-gazing of Socrates and Actaeon, the Narcissan/*Phaedran* grove in which these episodes take place, etc. – back to the marble grove of *Met.* 2.4, and furthermore, if we consider this grove in light of Ovid’s Actaeon episode, I suggest that we will find a unifying set of phenomena related to the kind of mirror-gazing we see in *Met.* 2.4: obstruction of the throat and/or a loss of voice, immobilization, and even death.

³⁶³ Heath 1992, 118.

³⁶⁴ See May 2013, 183 *ad loc. Met.* 18.8 for a discussion of *loci amoeni* as places where terrible things happen in Latin literature. She cites as one *comparandum* the *locus amoenus* where Ovid’s Narcissus and Echo episode happens.

³⁶⁵ See May 2013, 185 *ad loc. Met.* 19.6 for the correspondences between Apuleius’ Socrates here and Lucius at the opening of the novel.

As I suggested above, Ovid's Narcissus withers away in despair, in part, because there is a failure of words: the delights of seeing are supposed to give way to a verbal exchange, *verba* being an important sign of erotic reciprocity. So also, Ovid's Actaeon episode ends in a loss of voice and a failure of language to accomplish what the speaker wants. As John Heath notes of Ovid's Actaeon, there is a paradox in the punishment of the voyeur: Diana punishes Actaeon not by blinding him – the expected form of punishment – but by depriving him of his voice, the primary means of narrative.³⁶⁶ At 3.192-3, upon discovering a voyeur, gazing upon her naked body, Diana says to Actaeon:

nunc tibi me posito visam velamine narres,
sit poeteris narrare, licet!...

Now you are free to tell that you have seen me all unrobed – if you will be able to describe it!

What Diana fears is precisely *ekphrasis* and Actaeon's ability to narrate (*narres*) in detail how he has seen the goddess undressed and enjoyed the big reveal.³⁶⁷ As a consequence of Diana's curse, moreover, Actaeon loses his capacity to vocalize when he encounters himself in the mirror at 3.200-3 and recognizes his new state as a stag:

Ut vero vultus et cornua vidit in unda,³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ See Heath 1992, 67: "Actaeon has *seen* Diana naked in the pool...so it is awkward, if not completely incongruous, for the goddess to focus on his promised loss of speech. Why is his voice to be the key to his extended punishment and not his sight? Why should Diana take such an inapposite rhetorical approach to the accidental spectator?"

³⁶⁷ The verb *narro*, though not explicitly used in discussions of *ekphrasis*, does seem to have many citations for 'narrative description' (*OLD* 2a).

³⁶⁸ It should be noted that Tarrant 2004, following Hensius and a late manuscript ζ , deletes this line from his text. By his own admission, however, Tarrant is attempting to revive a 17th century view about interpolation in Latin poetry - a 'skeptical' view held by 'heroic critics' such as Hensius and Bentley - and as a consequence is quick to bracket lines in his text (see Tarrant 2000 where he explains some of his choices for his Oxford text of Ovid). *Contra* Hensius, Merkel 1894 is one of many critics who accept this line as authentic. Moreover, even if Tarrant is correct that Ovid didn't compose this line, he nonetheless maintains that it was of ancient origin, a result of the manner in which ancient readers interacted with their texts through imitation, a process which he labels 'collaborative interpolation' (see Tarrant 1987 for more

“me miserum!” dicturus erat: vox nulla secuta est.
Ingemuit: vox illa fuit, lacrimaeque per ora
non sua fluxerunt; mens tantum pristina mansit.

But when he saw the face and the horns in the water,
“oh I am wretched” he was about to say: but no voice came out.
He groaned: that was his voice, and tears flowed down cheeks that weren’t
his own; Only his mind remained unchanged.

There is a deep connection here between the visual experience in the mirror and the loss of verbalization, between the ocular and the oral. We may recall here that Lucius also laments the loss of his voice after his metamorphosis on a number of occasions.³⁶⁹ One passage of particular interest is *Met.* 7.2 where Lucius-*asinus* attempts to defend himself against charges brought against him, but only manages to “bellow” (*boavi*) the word *non* over and over.³⁷⁰ We find a similar loss of capacity for speech at the conclusion of the novel when Lucius is unable to narrate the mysteries into which he has been initiated,³⁷¹ and thereby rendered a speechless and voiceless Actaeonic figure. Indeed, the words of Ovid’s Actaeon fail him at precisely the moment he needs them, that is, when he tries to identify himself to his dogs (3.229):

“Actaeon ego sum, dominum cognoscite vestrum!”³⁷²
Verba animo desunt.

“I am Actaeon, recognize your master!”
but the words were lacking a mind.

on this distinction). For my purposes, then, this line very well could have slipped into the Ovidian tradition by the time Apuleius read the *Metamorphoses*.

³⁶⁹ See *Met.* 3.29; 7.26; 8.29; 9.26.

³⁷⁰ *Met.* 7.3: *volui dicere ‘Non feci.’ Et verbum quidem praecedens semel ac saepius immodice clamitavi, sequens vero nullo pacto disserere potui, sed in prima remansi voce, et identidem boavi ‘Non, non,’ quamquam nimia rotunditate pendulas vibrassem labias.*

³⁷¹ See the famous passage, *Met.* 11.23: *Quaeras forsitan satis anxie, studiose lector, quid deinde dictum, quid factum: dicerem si dicere liceret, cognosceres si liceret audire: sed parem noxam contraherent aures et linguae illae temerariae curiositatis.*

³⁷² Again, Tarrant 2004 deletes this line from his text, following Hensius, but with (apparently) no manuscript evidence.

Actaeon-the-stag demands from his dogs recognition (*cognoscite*) of his identity by claiming a one-to-one correspondence between himself and their master ‘Actaeon’. However, his words fail him in what might be a true failure of *mimesis*: *verba desunt* may have even been a phrase for failed oratory, or rhetoric that does not succeed in stirring the emotions of viewers.³⁷³ Actaeon’s inability to defend himself with language could be viewed as a narrative playing out of Platonic concerns with *mimesis*: all representation – language (λόγοι), artistic media (ζωγραφία), and the mirror (κάτοπτρον) – falls short in the Platonic perspective because it is unable to convey its true meaning to viewers/listeners and it cannot respond to those who interact with it.

So, returning once again to *Met.* 2.4, what can we say about the loss of voice and statuization of this Actaeon, who must by his very nature as a ‘plastic’ representation become the material of other people’s narratives? Or to phrase it differently, does the *simulacrum* actually have a *curiosus optutus*, or is this an interpretive feature that Lucius adds to the scene with his words? Since the artistic representation is mediated through the mirroring water in Lucius’ visual experience, and in turn, through Lucius’ *ekphrasis* of the mirrored *simulacrum* of a *simulacrum* in our visual experience – twice removed from the original – is it possible that Apuleius is playing some deeply Platonic games with us in displaying such metamorphoses of iconography, tradition, and interpretation?

³⁷³ See e.g. Quint. *Inst. Orat.* 10.7.16.1: *quare capiendae sunt illae, de quibus dixi, rerum imagines, quas vocari παντασίας indicavimus, omniaque, de quibus dicturi erimus, personae, quaestiones, spes, metus habenda in oculis, in adfectus recipienda. pectus est enim, quod disertos facit, et vis mentis. ideoque imperitis quoque, si modo sint aliquo adfectu concitati, verba non desunt.* Cf. Cic. *De Orat.* 2.110.6 for a discussion of failed oratory from “lacking words”.

Apuleius' *ekphrasis* concludes when Lucius' inner fantasy world is interrupted by Byrrhena's exegesis of the scene³⁷⁴:

Dum haec identidem rimabundus exinde delector, 'Tua sunt' ait Byrrhaena 'Cuncta quae vides '

While I stood there, inspecting the scene closely and taking great pleasure from it, Byrrhena said, 'it's yours, everything you see.'

As Lucius becomes lost in a kind of fantasy version of the statuary scene,³⁷⁵ like a character in a movie whose stare goes blank as the film cuts to his/her fantasy, Byrrhena snaps him out of it with a seemingly hospitable gesture that turns out to be a foreboding warning.³⁷⁶ Byrrhena's single line is probably one of the most discussed lines in Apuleian scholarship, particularly because it recurs after the *ekphrasis* of Cupid's palace when the disembodied voices say the same words to Psyche (5.2).³⁷⁷ I would like to meditate briefly on some of the potential meanings of the ominous admonition. Many commentators have pointed out the irony of these lines, as Lucius is soon to undergo his own metamorphosis only to be perpetually threatened by an Actaeonic kind of rending.³⁷⁸ A different way to read this exegesis is to see the erotic adventure Lucius imagines in the

³⁷⁴ On Byrrhena as the traditional ἐξηγητής of an *ekphrasis* in the scene, see Paschalis 2002, 139, though we should note that he oscillates between Byrrhena as exegete and Lucius-*auctor* as interpreter. On the ἐξηγητής more generally in novelistic *ekphraseis*, see Bartsch 1989.

³⁷⁵ It should be noted that embedded in the word *delecto* are ideas of deception (ἀπατάω) and seductive charm (ἡδομαι), the very features of *mimesis* that Plato warns us about. See TLL GLOSS on *delecto*.

³⁷⁶ Winkler 1985, 168, who calls this line, "a lovely ambiguity, read as hospitable by the first-reader, as ominous by the second-reader". Cf. James 1987, 128: "Byrrhaena's words to Lucius appear to be nothing more than a politeness of the 'make yourself at home' manner. Closer analysis reveals a possible premonition, that Actaeon's fate, brought about by an illicit curiosity, prefigures Lucius' unfortunate transformation".

³⁷⁷ See, for instance, James 1987, 127-8;

³⁷⁸ See GCA 2001, 115-6 *ad loc.* For all of the Actaeonic threats to Lucius, see Heath 1992, 102-121. At 110-2, in particular, Heath notes how Lucius-the-ass is almost ripped apart by dogs, or other forms of mutilation, often throughout the novel: 4.3, by hounds, 6.26, by wolves and birds, 6.31-2, by his captors, 7.16, by horses, 7.22, by the shepherds and the wicked boy, 8.16-7, by wolves, and at other places where Lucius fears an Actaeonic fate. Other characters in frame tales also undergo Actaeonic rending, such as the Trojan bear, Thrasykleon (4.20).

mirror as the reference point of *tua*: Byrrhena says, ‘this voyeuristic experience could be yours, as long as you let it take you.’ But the feature most interesting to me – and one that has not been fully explored in relation to Byrrhena’s words – is the fact that Lucius himself becomes the object of other people’s gazes, standing as a *simulacrum* next to Isis in book 11.³⁷⁹ If vision is a form of consumption,³⁸⁰ and narratives are also framed as comestibles – as they are at the end of book 1, where Lucius has “feasted on stories alone” (*cenatus solis fabulis*) – then this ominous warning to Lucius could also be a warning to us about gazing upon the *simulacrum* of a man *iam in asinum* and taking a kind of pleasure out of it. The imagination is a dangerous thing, as Plato knew well; and perhaps the courtesan-fidelity of this mode of *mimesis* can seduce us into looking along with Lucius. As we turn to the end of the novel, where Lucius is continually immobilized and eventually muted, we may do well to remember Byrrhena’s foreboding exegesis of her own statuary ensemble. And just as Lucius was given a choice (or perhaps a veiled warning) about the appropriate response to viewing and imagining the illicit sight of the naked goddess in the atrium, I suggest that we are invited by the spectacle of Lucius in book 11 to consider for ourselves the appropriate response to reading this novel and enjoying the erotic sights, mediated and enhanced through ekphrastic description.

³⁷⁹ A similar point has been made in Slater 1998 and Heath 1992. However, both of them read Lucius’ statuization as a kind of cynical moment, one that reveals the underlying satire of book 11. I do not disagree that Lucius looks a bit foolish in the end – though appearing foolish to outsiders would not really be a major concern of religious initiates – or Platonists for that matter; but I think there is a didactic warning to the reader – as I will discuss – which is, in fact, quite serious.

³⁸⁰ Cf. Helen Morales’ notion of the “consumptive gaze” in the Second Sophistic (Morales 2004, 32-4).

Isis on the Pedestal, Reader at the Crossroads:

We may recall from our discussion of Lucian's *de Domo* the analogy we are given by the first λόγος as to what the two possible responses are to the erotic desire inspired by beauty. Just as Alexander, upon feeling ἐπιθυμία at the sight of the river Cydnus, longed to "become part of the beauty" (μέρος τοῦ κάλλους αὐτοῦ γενέσθαι) no matter what the consequences, viewers everywhere should not just stand dumbstruck in awe and silence, but ought to become one with the sight by "reciprocating with a speech" (λόγῳ ἀμείψασθαι τὴν θεάν). Entering the hall is framed as a kind of erotic tryst – like Alexander entering the river – and narrating the scenes it displays represents a way to become one with it. At the end of *Met.* 2.4, Lucius, upon inspecting (*rimabundus*) and taking pleasure (*delector*)³⁸¹ at the sight of Byrrhena's atrium, responds with a desire to become part of the scene without experiencing the consequences that Actaeon does. He races back to Milo's house only to get himself entangled in an erotic tryst with Photis – who inspires in him a similar kind of dumb stupefaction. And he, too, wants to become a participant in the atrium scene by witnessing a superhuman woman getting undressed and by undergoing his own metamorphosis into a different kind of animal, namely, a winged bird. We will return to this scene and the way it progresses through book 2 in the next chapter. There, I will argue that Lucius attempts to undergo a kind of idealized Platonic encounter through gazing into the mirror of another person's eyes and experiencing a flight of the soul; however, he ends up more closely resembling a corrupted viewer, such

³⁸¹ Freudenberg 2007, 243-5 notes a significant word play in the terms *rimabundus* and *delector* here. *Rimabundus*, an Apuleian coinage as far as scholars can tell, seems to be a play on *mirabundus*, which is, in fact, Lucius' actual affective reaction to this statuary scene – a reaction that is appropriate for aesthetic responses to art. *Delector*, on the other hand, has embedded in it the term *lector*, and therefore, may remind the reader of the opening command to pay attention: *inten-de-lector* (*Met.* 1.1).

as we find in pseudo-Lucian's *Amores*, where two viewers debate which side of the Knidian Aphrodite offers more erotic pleasure.

What is important to conclude this chapter, however, is to note how Lucius does, in fact, become part of Byrrhaena's atrium: in books 2-10, by experiencing an Actaeonic kind of metamorphosis, i.e., by changing into a quadruped and being threatened with constant *σπαράγμός*; but also in a very different way in book 11, i.e., by becoming a *simulacrum* in a mirroring relationship with a goddess for all time. At the end of book 11, after being initiated into the cult of the goddess, Lucius comes full circle and appears as a *simulacrum* for the people to theorize. Many recent scholars have considered *Metamorphoses* 11.26.1 to be a "first end" to the novel, a kind of anti-closural device.³⁸² In the chapters leading up to this first ending, Lucius offers us a characterization of himself during his initiation into the mysteries of Isis. His very first reaction to the end of the goddess' procession is phrased in terms that recall Lucius' prolonged tryst with Photis (*Met.* 11.17):

Nec tamen me sinebat animus ungue latius indidem digredi, sed intentus in deae specimen pristinos casus meos recordabar.

Yet, my spirit did not allow me to move from that spot further than a nail's breadth (*ungue latius*), but intent on the statue of the goddess, I recalled my former misfortunes.

This strange idiom, *ungue latius*, which the Groningen commentaries note is proverbial,³⁸³ only appears in this form in Apuleius; moreover, one of the other two

³⁸² See Finkelpearl 2004 for the most recent discussion of the anti-closure of the *Metamorphoses*. Cf. Winkler 1985, 215-23 who discussed a piling up of epilogues – what he calls 'epiepilogues' – that serve to pose hermeneutic problems for the reader.

³⁸³ See *GCA* 2000 329, *ad loc.* 10.24. The commentator cites Otto 1890, 356 as evidence for the proverbial nature of this idiom; and while similar versions of the idiom appear, e.g., in Plautus, they are not only rare but do not appear in this particular form until Apuleius.

instances of this phrase is used to describe Lucius' state as a sexually submissive slave to Photis. As he requests to leave the sexual service of Milo's maidservant, Lucius explains (*Met.* 2.18):

Ergo igitur Fotis erat adeunda deque nutu eius consilium velut auspicium
petendum: quae quanquam invita quod a se ungue latius digrederer, tamen
comiter amatoriae militiae brevem commeatum indulsit.

Therefore, Photis had to be approached, and advice had to be sought from her nod (*nutu*) as if it were auspices. And she, though she was unwilling to let me depart from her further than a nail's breadth (*ungue latius*), nevertheless kindly granted me a brief furlough from our amatory combat.

The repetition of the idiom encourages us to consider these passages in tandem and to ponder Lucius' relationship to the goddess in light of his earlier erotic masters.³⁸⁴ John Heath, furthermore, has suggested that Lucius' immediate response to the train of Isis foreshadows his immobilization (and later, statuization) in the religious cult of Isis. But, I would go further to suggest a stronger connection between the mirror/statue dichotomy that I have already discussed at length in this chapter. After all, we may notice that it is Photis' erotic and dominant nod (*nutus*) to which Lucius responds in book 2. And the nail – *unguis* – was a well-known metaphor for the precision with which a sculptor crafts a statue: one judges the aesthetic success of a sculptural representation from the attention to detail seen in the fingernail.³⁸⁵ In both cases, Lucius has become an immobilized statue, the only difference being the mistress whose nod he (subserviently) mirrors. Here in book

³⁸⁴ See *GCA* 2015, 322 *ad loc.* 11.17.5 (though the commentators do little to suggest a strong connection beyond the verbal parallel). On the Photis-Venus-Isis correspondence more broadly, see Krabbe 2003, 580-7.

³⁸⁵ *OLD* 1b. In particular, see Horace's *Sat.* 1.5.32, where he describes Fonteius Capito as a man "made to the nail" (*homo ad unguem factus*). That this metaphor is borrowed from statuary is clear from *Ars Poet.* 294, where Horace uses the same metaphor for the making of poetry. See D'Angour 1999 for the argument that the phrase *ad unguem* refers not to the "nail-test" sculptors would use to see how finely they had crafted something, but rather, to the level of detail a sculpture had.

11, however, it is his own spirit (*animus*) that does the bidding; and in recalling his earlier misfortunes (*pristinos casus meos recordabar*), the narrator invites the reader to participate in this recollection and reevaluation of books 1-10, as the Groningen group notes.³⁸⁶

As Lucius' *ekphrasis* of himself continues, he begins to resemble more closely one of the statues in Byrrhena's atrium in 2.4. At the behest of the priest, Lucius stands as a spectacle before the *simulacrum* of the goddess (*Met.* 11.24):

Namque in ipso aedis sacrae meditullio ante deae simulacrum constitutum
tribunal ligneum iussus superstiti byssina quidem, sed floride depicta veste
conspicuus...Quaqua tamen viseres, colore vario circumnotatis insignibar
animalibus...

For bidden by the priest, I stepped up on a wooden platform set in the very middle of the sanctuary in front of the statue of the goddess, and I attracted attention by reason of my tunic, which was made of flax, but colorfully decorated...Wherever you looked, I was marked with animals embroidered in variegated colors on my garment.

Signaling a clear echo of Byrrhena's atrium, the *simulacrum* of the goddess that Lucius approaches is stationed in the "very middle of the sacred temple" (*in ipso aedis sacrae meditullio ante deae simulacrum*), similarly to the *lapis*-Diana, which was "occupying in balance the middle of the whole place" (*Met.* 2.4: *tenet libratam totius loci medietatem*). It is clear from this description, however, that Isis is not the focal point: rather, the object of our gaze turns out to be Lucius, conspicuous for the manner in which his flowery clothing offers a pleasurable display for those looking. Just as Actaeon was "seen"

³⁸⁶ *GCA* 2015 323, *ad loc.* 11.17.5: "the emphatic position of the verb *recordabar* at the end of the sentence (and of the chapter) draws attention to the importance of rethinking these former tribulations as an interpretive background to Lucius' present situation, both for Lucius and for the reader. Whereas Lucius rethinks his former life while contemplating the goddess, to whom he owes his new life, the reader is implicitly invited to rethink his stance as a reader, after reading the first ten books of the novel, and to evaluate – with hindsight, as it were – what kind of novel s/he has read so far, or will have read, in case s/he will read, remember, and rethink".

(*visitur*), with Lucius mediating the ensemble through the moving water (and through his words), so also, the narrating *ego* in book 11 directs our attention to himself – once again, in a 2nd person singular generalizing subjunctive, a traditional mode of *ekphrastic* incorporation: “wherever *you* looked” (*viseres*; note that it is the same verb used for Actaeon and for the *imago* of the mirror in *Apol.* 14).³⁸⁷ That is to say, he uses similar tactics of readerly incorporation in his *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena’s atrium, but here, Lucius is giving an *ekphrasis* of himself, a sight for which he could not possibly fully account (except through the aid of a *speculum*). Furthermore, the complex visual experience he depicts is one of colorful variegation (*vario colore*) and ornamentation. He continues describing his transformation into a statue in 11.24:

Sic ad instar Solis exornato me et in uicem simulacri constituto, repente uelis reductis, in aspectum populus errabat.

Adorned like the sun in this way and set up in the manner of a *simulacrum*, with the curtains suddenly drawn, the people wandered about looking for a glimpse.

Lucius’ role as a statue in this final scene has drawn polarized responses from scholars – responses that largely map onto the hermeneutic divide between comedic/parodic/satiric and serious/religious/philosophical readings of the *Met.* For instance, Niall Slater, who has investigated the Gaze and the role of spectacle in the novel (Slater 1998 and Slater 2003, respectively), finds this final objectification of Lucius under the gaze of Isis “less appealing than appalling”.³⁸⁸ On the other hand, the Groningen group on the Isis book – though recognizing the connections between this scene, Psyche’s role as a statue in book

³⁸⁷ Cf. the discussion of the 2nd person singular in *GCA* 2015, 412 *ad loc.*, where they also draw a comparison between this mode of reader incorporation and the *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena’s atrium in 2.4.

³⁸⁸ Slater 1998, 40: “...I nonetheless find the pattern that transforms Lucius from a curious if over-eager explorer of his world into a virtually inanimate thing at the end less appealing than appalling”.

4 (4.32: *ut simulacrum fabre politum mirantur omnes*), and the statuary ensemble in Byrrhena's atrium – nevertheless acknowledge elements of philosophical and religious initiation here (e.g., the initiate “looking down” on the uninitiated). Thus, they conclude of Lucius' self-description:

Lucius' gazing at Isis' statue can be viewed as a religious version of his marveling at the Diana statue in the Actaeon group...³⁸⁹

To be honest, I am not particularly interested in trying to push for one or the other interpretation of this scene. I see the decision about whether to view Lucius cynically or seriously here as a major part of the embedded choice that Apuleius asks readers to make. What I am more concerned with is the way in which this scene, as the culmination of Lucius' self-*ekphrasis*, incorporates readers into the *populus* that tries to catch a glimpse of the spectacle, collapsing the distance between internal and external audiences, and by doing so, subtly warning us to “read” with caution. As a *simulacrum* standing next to a *simulacrum* of a goddess, Lucius indeed recalls the half-metamorphosed *simulacrum* Actaeon in *Met.* 2.4: he has already been transformed into a quadruped and perpetually threatened with *sparagmos*; and here, he stands as a *simulacrum* of a man *in the process* of a religious metamorphosis in response to the nod of his goddess (*Met.* 11.21: *deae nutu*).³⁹⁰ We may add to this the fact that Lucius' final words of the novel, an address to the goddess, are a promise to guard her image for eternity (11.25):

diuinos tuos uultus numenque sanctissimum intra pectoris mei secreta conditum
perpetuo custodiens *imaginabor*.

³⁸⁹ *GCA* 2015, 407.

³⁹⁰ The nod of the goddess is, in fact, quite prominent in the Isis book, as it opens Lucius' revelation in 11.1, and closes his praise of the divinity in 11.25.

I shall store your divine countenance and sacred godhead in the secret places of my heart, forever guarding it and imaging it.

It is significant that the final word that the reborn, retransformed, and converted Lucius speaks in the novel is a promise to posit an *imago* of the goddess in his heart. The word *imaginor*, which I have tentatively translated “imaging”, only occurs 3 other times in the Apuleian corpus,³⁹¹ and the most suggestive instance for our purposes refers to Socrates’ ghastly appearance just before his death in book 1: at 1.19, Aristomenes describes how Socrates becomes so distorted in his *color* that he “recalls an image of those nocturnal Furies” (*nocturnas...Furias illas imaginanti*). In other words, Lucius stands as a *simulacrum* in a statuary ensemble next to a *simulacrum* of a goddess, while himself being in the process of transforming and existing in a kind of mirroring relationship with Isis – one which corresponds in the text, as it were, to Socrates’ death. That his metamorphosis into the *simulacrum Actaeon* of Byrrhena’s atrium has come full circle should be clear at this point. This transformation, in turn, opens him up to become the subject of other people’s narrative interpretations, much as he himself turned the “bodies in space” of Byrrhena’s atrium into “actions in time” through *ekphrastic* description.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this statuary ensemble – and one that has gone completely unnoticed in the scholarship to my knowledge – is the fact that the bystanders who view the *simulacrum* of Lucius and who represent the internal audience that mirrors us readers as external audience, are said to “wander about” (*errare*) the statue, “looking for a glimpse” (*in aspectum*). We may recall that one of the innovative

³⁹¹ See *Apol.* 15; *Met.* 1.19; *Met.* 8.12. It should not go unnoticed that *Met.* 8.12 concerns dreaming (*imaginor*) of an erotic encounter.

features of Apuleius' Actaeon is the addition of the "curious glance" (*curiosus optutus*) with which the *simulacrum* looks at the "Striding Diana" as she transforms into the "Bathing Diana". As has been thoroughly dealt with in the scholarship, this innovation is tantamount to reinterpreting Ovid's exculpation of Actaeon from blame and transforming Actaeon into an intentional voyeur, like Lucius himself.³⁹² In Ovid, though, the unnamed narrator takes pains to emphasize that it was *error*, and not *crimen*, that led Actaeon to his demise. Indeed, in an important exegetical interruption, the Ovidian speaker exclaims: "for what blame did *error* have?" (*quod enim scelus error habebat?*).³⁹³ *Error*, moreover, is said to incite and deceive the eyes of Narcissus (*oculos idem, qui decipit, incitat error*), as he gazes dumbstruck upon his own statuized form. Thus, we may be invited by this choice of the word, *errare* – a word that is conspicuously absent from Apuleius' Actaeon episode but emphasized in the two related Ovidian episodes of mirror-gazing – to ponder the people's visual experience of this statuary ensemble, and more importantly, to consider our relationship to it as the external viewing audience. Perhaps Apuleius' Actaeon was not a victim of *error* because Lucius stumbled into Byrrhena's atrium with a heightened sense of curiosity for magic and for visual delights and projected his own desires onto that scene. But we may have unwittingly stumbled upon Apuleius' text by a kind of *error*, just as the people who view the statuary ensemble of a *simulacrum* Lucius imaging Isis wander around for a glance at the statue.

³⁹² See, e.g., GCA 2001, 112 *ad loc.* *curiosum optutum* for discussion as well as bibliography on this feature of Apuleius' version.

³⁹³ We may also recall here Ovid's famous claim to have been exiled on two charges, *carmen et error* (*Trist.* 2.207). He leaves his *error* unspecified, but claims that *carmina* cannot corrupt moral readers. For an interesting reading of *Tristia* 2 in terms of audience reception and reader response, see Gibson 1999.

It is unclear from the text exactly how the people respond to this spectacular sight of a man garbed in a colorful robe, embroidered with otherworldly, hybrid creatures (e.g., Indian dragons and Hyperborean griffins). We know from 11.13, though, that the people “marvel” (*populi mirantur*) at the sight of Isis’ cortege – a response that is different from the religious devotees who express reverence (*religiosi venerantur*).³⁹⁴ But for us seeing this spectacular sight, we might wonder whether we, too, have been incorporated into a kind of Actaeonic atrium scene or whether there is another way to read this. Considering that we have been given access to the spectacle of a *simulacrum* – one that could be said to be made up of “statues of gods” (*simulacrum deorum*), if we accept the Groningen commentators’ suggestion that Lucius is reminiscent of Osiris in this spectacle³⁹⁵ – then we may think back not to Ovid’s Pygmalion or Narcissus, but to the end of Plato’s *Symposium*, where Socrates himself is described as having ἀγάλματα θεῶν within his Satyr-esque external shell. I will explore this suggestion in much greater detail in chapter 4 of this dissertation, where I argue that the Prologue of the *Metamorphoses* has language reminiscent of Alcibiades’ encomium of Socrates. But it is worth noting here that an alternative reading to the cynical reading of book 11, which envisions this statuary ensemble as merely an Actaeon-Diana atrium retooled in Egyptian garb,³⁹⁶ is to consider this *imago* Lucius hides within his heart as a possible allusion to those ἀγάλματα θεῶν that Socrates has inside of him. To be sure, there is still a kind of immobilization or a loss

³⁹⁴ Cf. *GCA* 2015, 265 *ad loc.* on the antithesis of these two responses by the un-initiated and the initiated.

³⁹⁵ *GCA* 2015, 405-6.

³⁹⁶ Slater 1998, 46-7 takes this position the most starkly: “My own experience of reading and re-reading Apuleius, however, has not left me balanced between two interpretations of the novel (either as an entertaining adventure with no deeper meaning or as a narrative of progress toward salvation) but more and more convinced of the irony of the ending and its final objectification of Lucius under the gaze of Isis. If we as readers wish to avoid her petrifying gaze, we would do well to observe the dynamics of that gaze as reflected in the viewpoint in the water”.

of narrative motion in Lucius' statuization; and his role as a mirror of the goddess, erotically subservient with a courtesan fidelity, may seem to many readers a frightening conclusion to a tale of excessive curiosity. But Plato's Socrates, too, reveals an immobilized and statued speaker of "naked speeches" at the end of the *Symposium*; Socrates, too, is famously bald, half-human-half-ass, and on display for viewers to wander in and gaze upon.³⁹⁷ To conclude, I would only like to point out the frightening danger involved in looking at the enchanting visual-aural spectacle of Socrates. Alcibiades is simultaneously mystified by and afraid of Socrates' bewitching words, to such an extent, in fact, that he likens Socrates to a Siren and runs away for fear of becoming a statue beside him (*Symp.* 216a):

βίᾱ οὖν ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν Σειρήνων ἐπισχόμενος τὰ ὄτα οἴχομαι φεύγων, ἵνα μὴ αὐτοῦ καθήμενος παρὰ τούτῳ καταγερῶ.

Therefore, shutting up my ears by force, as if from the Sirens, I run away in flight, in order that I may not grow old, sitting here beside him.

The synaesthetic spectacle of Socrates, which inspires the same affective response of stupefaction that later becomes associated with aesthetic and erotic responses to beauty, has the power to force (ἀναγκάζει) Alcibiades to make a choice, namely, whether to pursue a successful career in politics or whether to leave that behind and strive in pursuit of self-knowledge beside Socrates. It is quite possible that the spectacle of Byrrhena's atrium has seduced us to participate in Lucius' voyeurism and compelled us to imagine the goddess undressing; and perhaps we have done so with the belief that we stand *pronus* over our texts, at a safe distance of three removes from the original. If so,

³⁹⁷ Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012 has suggested that Lucius' appearance as a bald-headed priest at the end of book 11 is also reminiscent of this version of Socrates.

Apuleius will have pulled off the trick of deluding us into a Pygmalion-esque fantasy, inciting in us erotic desire for the narrative the mirror offers. However, what is more frightening to me is the possibility that I may become stuck sitting next to this pseudo-Socrates, compelled to rethink my life choices. In fact, I would posit that the only thing more frightening than the cynical reading of this text is the serious one. Apuleius offers a choice to his readers – either, to look at Lucius and laugh, as Lucius does with the winged-ass in Isis' cortege, or to remember Socrates and his bewitching words. What the reader chooses to do at the crossroads is his or her decision.

CHAPTER 3: The Mirror of Ἔπος: Platonic Epiphany in the Haarspiegel of the *Metamorphoses*:

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Platonic concerns about the dangerous seductions of *mimesis* are at the heart of Lucius' visual encounters throughout the *Metamorphoses*. The act of looking into the mirror and enjoying the spectacle it displays is dangerous because it may incorporate the viewer into the scene. And Lucius' role as a *simulacrum* – much like the *simulacrum Actaeon* we meet in book 2 – can be read as a warning to readers about the dangers of gazing into this text and looking at the *simulacrum* of a man *iam in asinum ferinus*. In this chapter, we will turn away from the aesthetic concerns of the *Republic* and Apuleius' reception of them, and towards a different set of mirroring encounters in the *Metamorphoses* that reenact the sublime catoptric encounter between a lover and beloved in the *Phaedrus*. That is, after inspecting Byrrhena's atrium and conceiving an erotic desire for the narrative to play out, Lucius has a specular encounter with a beloved, the maidservant Photis, in which he likens her hair to a mirror in its capacity to offer a transcendent encounter to the viewer.

Importantly, this *Encomium of Hair* (*Met.* 2.9), which can be read as part of the budding tradition of hair-encomia in the Imperial Era and the Second Sophistic,³⁹⁸ is echoed in Lucius' religious, epiphanic encounter with Isis (11.3). In the *Cupid and Psyche* inset story (hereafter *C&P*), moreover, there is a third epiphany scene, which does not contain a *speculum per se*, but which provides a definite structural and thematic comparandum for the first two. The narrator of the tale describes the visual experience

³⁹⁸ Cf. Dio Chrysostom's *Encomium of Hair* found in the *Encomium of Baldness* by the 4th century C.E. bishop, Synesius of Cyrene. Also, see Eumolpus' *capillorum elegidarion* in Petr. *Sat.* 109 and Suet. *Dom.* 18, in which Suetonius claims that Domitian wrote a *de cura capillorum*.

Psyche has when she first see Cupid with an encomium of hair parallel to Lucius' in book 2 and in anticipation of the description of Isis' hair in book 11. These three passages create thematic correspondences between the viewers and the objects viewed (i.e., Lucius and Psyche both gaze upon hair and receive a revelation, Photis and Isis are both objects of Lucius' visual experience, etc.), but the underlying meaning of the relationships has yet to be fully discovered. In what follows, I argue that Apuleius' strange combination of these two fundamentally disparate objects – hair and the mirror – into a single object – what I will label the *Haarspiegel* for the sake of convenience – enables him to engage in a parodic investigation of Platonic love in Lucius' erotic (and religious) encounters. That is, on the one hand, I will show that the *Haarspiegel* alludes primarily to the Platonic tradition of erotic reciprocity, which is authorized by the catoptric encounter between the lover's and beloved's eyes in the *Phaedrus*. The eyes are windows to the soul, and the mirroring encounter between ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος has for the viewer/lover a pedagogical benefit similar to the didactic mirror of dialogue we saw in *Alcibiades I* (chapter 1).³⁹⁹ However, Apuleius' allusive technique is rarely so simple as to signal only one text. Just as we saw in chapters 1 and 2, the Roman literary and the Second Sophistic traditions of interpreting and appropriating Plato complicate the original Platonic model. Apuleius' particular innovation in constructing a dense structure of allusion, we will see, is to displace the locus of the self from the eyes onto the hair, thereby fetishizing the beloved. Moreover, there is a nexus of tropes – e.g. mirroring, epiphany, wings, erotic desire, and self-knowledge – that Apuleius adopts from the Platonic scene; but he complicates the fundamentally Platonic matrix of metaphors by mixing in other competing

³⁹⁹ We may recall from chapter 1 that Socrates and Alcibiades were figured as an ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος pair.

models of erotic love, such as the *domina/servus* model of Latin elegy or the kinky perverted sex-addiction of an epigram from Martial. To phrase it differently, Apuleius co-opts this heightened Platonic moment of mirroring between the eyes – a dialogic and intersubjective interaction – and reworks it into a ridiculous parody of revelation *through* appetitive pursuits. What we find in the generic richness of the passage is not merely a playful display piece of sophistic oratory or a literary showman sprinkling his otherwise low-brow novel with a dash of Platonism in order to appeal to more educated readers⁴⁰⁰; rather, in my view, it is a kind of interpretation of Plato – a scene where we see Lucius attempting to achieve the Platonic ideal of erotic reciprocity but parodically misconstruing the encounter and ultimately failing.

Before we get into specific scenes from Apuleius, though, perhaps it will be useful to clarify what I mean by my potentially controversial idea of “intentional” misreading. In what follows, I take as my premise that Lucius represents a bad reader of Plato and that his failure of interpretation demonstrates what happens when a person gets his hands on a Platonic dialogue and attempts to re-enact its scenes literally. In the case of Lucius, this means blending the Platonic model with other famous and seemingly related scenes and tropes from literature; and after performing a more detailed analysis of the particular scenes in question, we will analyze exactly how Lucius mixes other traditions and scenes together in this densely allusive *Haarspiegel*. If we do the work to disentangle – for lack of a better

⁴⁰⁰ See Harrison 2000 and van Mal-Maeder 1997, who are the two most outspoken proponents of this view. Recall also Swain 2001, 269, as a representative (albeit humorous and wry) passage for the *communis opinio*: “Apuleius was a showman and a playboy, clever but shallow. He deserved to be condemned for seducing a rich widow, but had the temerity to ground his innocence in the intellectual community between himself and the judge (the *Apology*). His egotism made him publish four books of highlights from his display speeches (the *Florida*). Intellectual vanity made him write a hack account of *Socrates and his Deity*. Finally his talents found a legitimate outlet in a comic novel about a man’s life as an ass (the *Metamorphoses*)”.

word – the tropes and allusions that Apuleius mixes together, though, we can see a hermeneutic function for complicating the Platonic model of epiphany: namely, it poses an embedded choice to the reader between pleasurable and philosophical models of love. In order to grasp more fully the matrix of terms embedded in the *Haarspiegel* and the symbolic valences of the terms, it will be necessary first to take another detour into the *Apologia* and consider Apuleius' anti-encomium of his own hair. There, we will see how Apuleius not only associates beautiful hair with the Platonic recollection of the upper realm of Forms, but also how Apuleius' own presentation of his grotesque external appearance (i.e., his disheveled hair) and his beautiful statues within plays on the trope of the Marsyan Socrates and thus anticipates the parodic version of this in Lucius' baldness. In this scene, we will also see how Apuleius, gazing at the hair carved into a statuette of his god, re-enacts his Platonic model of epiphany.

I: Hair in the Apologia:

Apuleius' preoccupation with hair has already been discussed to some extent in the scholarly literature.⁴⁰¹ Hair style is, of course, the first subsidiary charge to which Apuleius responds in the *Apologia* and has therefore caused some readers to see Lucius' obsession with hair as merely autobiographical and comic play on the charges in the

⁴⁰¹ See Englert and Long 1973.

Apologia.⁴⁰² Indeed, the motif of the *capillus* provides one of the most ridiculous puns in the *Apologia*, when Apuleius makes light of the capital charge by referring to it as a *crinium crimen*.⁴⁰³ However, a closer analysis will reveal Apuleius' subtle engagement with the Socratic tradition of external grotesqueness accompanied by beautiful statues of gods within. We may recall from chapter 1 the description of Aemilianus, who has a disgusting face and yet fails to learn virtue through mirror-gazing. Apuleius, too, is not beautiful – at least, according to his rebuttal; but unlike Aemilianus, he has beautiful virtue beneath his ugly exterior, as symbolized by the beautiful statue of a god he carries with him.

Apologia 4 opens with Apuleius' initial rebuttal of the charge of being *formonsus*. Apuleius first quotes and paraphrases Paris' response to Hector's criticism of his dandyism: one should not reject the gifts given by the gods.⁴⁰⁴ If Apuleius is in fact *formonsus*, he argues, nature made him that way and he should not be expected to change it. In his extended treatment of the accusation, however, Apuleius addresses the behavioral connection between dandified hair and magical practices by appealing to a different tradition of beautiful hair, namely philosophy, in which the practitioners are not effeminate but adorn their hair nonetheless. And finally, he concludes his rebuttal by denying the validity of the accusation and by citing his etiolated body and his disgusting

⁴⁰² See Englert and Long 1973, 237. Cf. Hicter 1944, 100-1, who speculates that Lucius' beauty in the *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 2.2) is a sarcastic joke on the accusation of *formonsus* that is laid against Apuleius in the *Apologia*.

⁴⁰³ Hunink 1997, 26 notes: "the sound effect [of the phrase *crinium crimen*] makes the charge seem even more ridiculous...the serious *crimen capitis* for which Apuleius is presently standing trial, is reduced to a mere trifle." On the seriousness of the charge laid against Apuleius and the legitimate connections between long hair and magic, see Bradley 1997, 217-8.

⁴⁰⁴ *Il.* 3.65-6: οὐ τοι ἀπόβλητ' ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα,/ ὅσσα κεν αὐτοὶ δῶσιν, ἐκὼν δ' οὐκ ἄν τις ἔλοιτο...

hair as the primary proofs that the charge is unfounded. At the end of *Apologia* 4, he explains:

sed haec defensio, ut dixi, aliquam multum a me remota est, cui praeter formae mediocritatem continuatio etiam litterati laboris omnem gratiam corpore deterget, habitudinem tenuat, sucum exsorbet, colorem obliterat, uigorem debilitat. capillus ipse, quem isti aperto mendacio ad lenocinium decoris promissum dixere, uides quam sit amoenus ac delicatus, horrore implexus atque impeditus, stupreo tomento adsimilis et inaequaliter hirtus et globosus et congestus, prorsum inenodabilis diutina incuria non modo comendi, sed saltem expediendi et discriminandi: satis ut puto crinium crimen, quod illi quasi capitale intenderunt, refutatur.

But such a defense is, as I said, some distance removed from me, since, aside from the mediocrity of my beauty, my constant pursuit of literary study wipes away every charm from my body, reduces me to a lean frame, sucks dry my life-blood, blots out my color, and weakens my strength. As to my hair, which they with a boldfaced lie claim I have let grow as an allurements of my beauty, you can see [for yourself] how ‘charming’ and how ‘delicate’ it is. As you see, it is horribly tangled, knotted and unkempt like flaxen cushion-stuffings, shaggy and unequal in length, so tangled and mangled by my prolonged careless neglect not only of arranging [it], but even of untangling and combing [it]. Viola! And so I think the charge of hair — a charge that they hurled at me as if it were a capital crime — is refuted.

At the very outset, this passage displays the kind of self-knowledge – i.e., knowledge of one’s own external appearance – that one could only acquire through contemplation in a mirror, which may explain why the charges are handled in tandem. It is philosophical *labor* – a life-choice that Apuleius shares with Plato of *de Platone et eius Dogmate*⁴⁰⁵ – that has removed the charm (*gratia*) from his body, emaciated his *habitus*, sucked out his life juice (*sucus*), and removed his *color* and *vigor*. That is, Apuleius depicts his body as emaciated – much like Narcissus, we may recall, who loses his *color* and *vigor* as he wastes away before the mirror (*Met.* 3.491-2), or Echo, who loses the “spirit of her whole

⁴⁰⁵ See *de Platone* 1.2, where Plato is said to have acquired Socratic philosophy through *labor* and to have added dignity to it through *elegantia*. Cf. Fletcher 2014, 57ff. for discussion.

body” (*Met.* 3.397: *sucus omnis corporis*) when her figure disintegrates – as a direct consequence of philosophical pursuits. Apuleius’ devotion to philosophy, beyond causing him to neglect his body, is most clearly demonstrated in his *capillus ipse*, which is matted, knotty, and uncombed. This self-description shares some important lexical and conceptual affinities with *Florida* 3, in which Apuleius describes a singing contest between Apollo and Marsyas and the subsequent flaying of Marsyas as a punishment for his hubris. Many scholars have noted the similarity, for instance, between Marsyas’ accusations against Apollo and the charges Apuleius’ relatives laid against him in the *Apologia*, suggesting that Apuleius aligns himself with the cultured Apollo and subtly refashions his accusers as Marsyas figures.⁴⁰⁶ However, recent scholarship has recognized that Apuleius, in fact, straddles the line between the cultured Apollo and the buffoonish Marsyas in his own self-presentation,⁴⁰⁷ citing as a primary piece of evidence Apuleius’ depiction of his own “Marsyas-like hair”.⁴⁰⁸ Thus, through a comparative reading across the Apuleian corpus, we can already see that Apuleius’ treatment of his hair alludes obliquely to the character of Marsyas, who is stripped of his hideous external appearance – his *corium* – and reveals his naked insides at the end of the competition.

Within the *Apologia* as well, there is a corresponding passage for this one, a kind of textual mirror that is meant to reflect Apuleius’ own statues hidden within. The last of the subsidiary charges for magical practices to which Apuleius responds concerns the

⁴⁰⁶ See, e.g., the readings of Harrison 2000, 98, Hunink 2001, 69-79, and Lee 2005, 72-3.

⁴⁰⁷ See Finkelpearl 2009 and Fletcher 2014, 228-234 for readings “against the grain” of previous scholarship.

⁴⁰⁸ See Finkelpearl 2009, 17: “...some element of self-satire seems evident; Apuleius himself talks a lot about hair. This passage has a strong resemblance to descriptions of hair in the *Metamorphoses*...and Lucius’ praise of Isis’ hair begins with the same three words, *iam primum crines*...Granted, Marsyas finds fault with the kind of hair that Lucius loves, but we will see below that Apuleius also claims to have Marsyas-like hair”.

ownership of a small skeletal, deformed statuette (*sigillum*). The prosecution ostensibly claimed that Apuleius worshipped this *sigillum*, referring to it as his βασιλεύς,⁴⁰⁹ and the charge held weight, as Hunink points out, on the grounds that it was a statuette of Mercury, the patron god of magic.⁴¹⁰ But Apuleius refutes the charge, first by referring to a legitimate use of the statuette in religious worship and claiming a Platonic precedent for his actions, and then by praising the beauty of the *sigillum* and insinuating that it could have no magical connection. In a classic ring-composition for the subsidiary charges, this scene formally recapitulates the earlier rebuttal of *Apologia* 4 where Apuleius refutes the charge of being beautiful (*formonsus*). At this point, however, Apuleius reverses the situation: in *Apologia* 4, the prosecution accuses Apuleius of being beautiful and he responds by pointing to his emaciated body and his disgusting hair as proofs of the prosecution's mendacity; here in *Apologia* 63, however, the prosecution depicts his statuette as deformed (*eviscerata*), etiolated (*macilenta*), and cadaverous (*diri cadaveris*), and Apuleius, in turn, brings forth a beautiful work of art, noteworthy for its remarkable hair. At *Apol.* 63, he produces the actual statuette (or so he claims)⁴¹¹ on the spot, hands it to the judge presiding over the case, and says:

en uide, quam facies eius decora et suci palaestrici plena sit, quam hilaris dei uultus, ut decenter utrimque lanugo malis deserpat, ut in capite crispatus capillus sub imo pillei umbraculo appareat, quam lepide super tempora pares pinnulae emineant, quam autem festiue circa humeros uestis substricta sit.

Behold! Look at how beautiful and full of wrestling sheen its aspect is, how charming is the face of the god, how pleasantly the youthful wool creeps down both cheeks, how the hair on his head appears to curl under the edge of the

⁴⁰⁹ *Apol.* 61: *Unum etiam crimen ab illis, cum Pudentillae litteras legerent, de cuiusdam sigilli fabricatione prolatum est, quod me aiunt ad magica maleficia occulta fabrica ligno exquisitissimo comparasse et, cum sit sceleti forma turpe et horribile, tamen impendio colere et Graeco uocabulo βασιλέα nuncupare.*

⁴¹⁰ See Hunink 1997, 162-174.

⁴¹¹ See Abt 1908, 223 for the suggestion that Apuleius could have brought in a different statue.

shadow of his cap, how charmingly his perfect little wings stick out from his temples, how handsomely his cloak is draped about his shoulders.

Two textual proofs demonstrate the structural correspondence between this passage and *Apologia* 4: (1) the recurrence of the word *sucus*⁴¹² in describing the aspect of a person and (2) the reuse of the construction *videre...quam...sit*, a formula Apuleius used earlier to condemn the appearance of his hair (*uides quam sit amoenus ac delicatus*) and recycles in this passage in order to eulogize the charming sight of the statuette. The *sigillum* of the god thus mirrors the original picture of Apuleius the audience was given in section 4: Apuleius' etiolated body, which had lost its color and life-blood (*sucus*) is only the external representation of his personhood; but he has a beautiful and bewitching statue of a god within. His disgusting hair is, in turn, counteracted by the beauty of the god's hair because the *sigillum* actually represents Apuleius' inner beauty, acquired through religious piety and pursuit of philosophical truth.⁴¹³ We saw in the previous chapter how the depiction of Lucius as a bald-headed *simulacrum* at the end of the *Metamorphoses* may allude (ironically) to Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates at the conclusion of the *Symposium*,⁴¹⁴ and we will flesh this point out more fully in the next chapter. Through this correspondence in the *Apologia*, Apuleius similarly taps into the important Socratic resonance with the parallelism of external ugliness and internal beauty. Just as the

⁴¹² *sucus* is a rarely used term in Apuleius, only occurring one other time in the Apuleian corpus besides these two parallel passages in the *Apologia*. The citation is in *Florida* 15, in the *ekphrasis* of the statue of Bathyllus. This *ekphrasis* again begins with a description of hair and then moves down to the neck (*cervix*), which is *suci plena*.

⁴¹³ The end of *Apol.* 63 ends with a claim used to bolster Apuleius' piety and to imply that Aemilianus is lacking religious piety: *Hunc qui sceletum audet dicere, profecto ille simulacra deorum nulla videt aut omnia neglegit*.

⁴¹⁴ See Graverini 2012 and Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012, who both make similar points.

Apologia as a whole fashions Apuleius out to be a second Socrates, so his external grotesqueness, which hides within a regal *sigillum dei*, further echoes Alcibiades' famous depiction of Socrates, who resembles the satyr Marsyas on the outside, but possesses ἀγάλματα θεῶν underneath.⁴¹⁵

This description of the statuette of Mercury also nicely introduces us to the nexus of Platonic tropes from the *Phaedrus* that we will encounter in the *Haarspiegel* of the *Metamorphoses* and its corresponding scenes. That is, after Apuleius describes the *sigillum*'s shiny aspect, downy beard, and beautiful wings, he explicitly links this sight to the sublime flight of the soul in the *Phaedrus*. The sight of the statuette provokes in Apuleius an imprecation against his accuser, Aemilianus, and a praise of the pursuits of the *Platonica familia*. Unlike Aemilianus, Maximus, the judge presiding over the case, knows about the higher Platonic pursuits, Apuleius argues, because he has “diligently read” (*legit...diligenter*) about the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος in the *Phaedrus* (247b-d). That is to say, after displaying the statue to the court, Apuleius presumes that the immediate reference point the judge would have in mind is the escape of the soul into the upper realm. This strange mixing of terms and attributing them to a myth from the *Phaedrus* demonstrates for us the conceptual apparatus that we will deploy for the remainder of the chapter – namely, the underlying influence of the *Phaedrus* for the conflation of hair, wings, and shiny things/mirrors as symbols for Platonic epiphany. However, this apparatus introduces a Platonic question about aesthetic and utilitarian modes of relating to the statuette. How should one relate to a statue or to the sight of beauty? In Platonic erotics, the beloved is transformed into a statue: as we will see, in the *Phaedrus*, the

⁴¹⁵ See *Symp.* 215a-216c. Cf. *Florida* 3, for Apuleius' treatment of the Marsyas myth.

viewer worships him as an ἄγαλμα, and in the *Symposium*, Alcibiades transforms his beloved Socrates into ἀγάλματα θεῶν. By looking upon these spectacles, erotic experience is also transformed into a religious/philosophical experience. It is for this reason that Apuleius, in depicting his disheveled hair as a philosophical life choice, strips his own external *corium*, as it were, and reveals a *sigillum dei* within. The accusation of the dangerous seduction of a widow is turned into an aesthetic experience of beauty that leads to a sublime encounter with the god and offers the “diligent reader” a moment of “investigating the upper realm” (*sublimiora quaeprimam vestigavit*).

2: Platonic Misinterpretation in the Narrative Frame for the Haarspiegel:

The famous mirroring scene in the *Phaedrus* occurs in the sublime Palinode situated in the middle of the dialogue, in which Socrates recants his earlier speech against Ἔρως by defending erotic desire and mania with a philosophical myth. This speech together with Diotima’s transcendent account of Ἔρως in the *Symposium* nearly acquired the status of educational textbooks on Platonic love in the Second Sophistic,⁴¹⁶ and as such, are functionally interchangeable as targets of allusion at this time. The fact that the Platonic dichotomy of “Heavenly Aphrodite” (οὐράνια Ἀφροδίτη) and “Vulgar Aphrodite” (Πάνδημος Ἀφροδίτη) provides an important schema for Lucius’ journey and conversion

⁴¹⁶ See Trapp 1990; and most recently, see Fletcher 2014, 265: “...Platonising fiction was popular in the Second Sophistic and it took a variety of forms, ranging from the intertextual to the allegorical. The former can be seen in how fictional narratives used allusions to Plato’s dialogues, especially the erotic dialogues (*Symposium* and *Phaedrus*) as part of their setting and narratives as a means of adding literary prestige to a traditionally ‘low’ genre”.

has already been recognized in the scholarship on Apuleius.⁴¹⁷ The binary is a recurrent theme throughout *C&P* and is explicitly highlighted in Lucius' vision of Isis, where he refers to her as "Heavenly Venus" (*Met.* 11.2: *caelestis Venus*). While this dichotomy is actually derived from Pausanias' speech in the *Symposium*, one could easily consider the *Phaedrus* to be a meditation on the same primary juxtaposition between shallow, earthly love and divine Ἔρως, and this is precisely the reading Apuleius endorsed.⁴¹⁸ Before we analyze the sublime moment of intersubjective mirroring in the *Phaedrus* and its *Nachleben*, therefore, it will be useful to consider more generally how Apuleius engages with Platonic ideas in books 2 and 3 of the *Met.* and complicates them with alternative models of erotic love. This will be particularly important for our consideration of the *Haarspiegel*, as it is bookended with scenes of Lucius misreading and misinterpreting Plato by subtly blending in other erotic scenes from literature.

The myth of the *Phaedrus* concerns the flight of souls that comes about through philosophical enlightenment. The soul that is perfect has wings and flies about in the air (τελέα μὲν οὖν οὔσα καὶ ἐπερωμένη μετεωροπορεῖ), but most souls have lost their wings (ἢ δὲ περορρυήσασα). The truly inspired lover of the *Phaedrus* is described in the language of disease: his inspiration is infectious. The sight of earthly beauty in the boy provides for the ἐραστής some kind of mystical experience of the Forms, but it also infects the ἐρώμενος with a similar internal experience. While mirroring in the *Phaedrus* offers a mystical contemplation to the ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος, the *Haarspiegel* in the

⁴¹⁷ See Kenney 1990a, 17-22.

⁴¹⁸ See de Wilde 2008, 171ff., who suggests that Apuleius' reading of the lock of Berenice represents a composite reading of these two dialogues and a fusion of the Οὐράνια Ἀφροδίτη/Πάνδημος Ἀφροδίτη dichotomy from the *Symposium* with the journey of the soul from the *Phaedrus*.

Metamorphoses comically parodies this feature of the Platonic scene. In the *Phaedrus*, for instance, the immaterial soul grows wings and begins to sprout feathers as a consequence of seeing the beautiful beloved and worshipping him “like a statue or a god” (θύοι ἄν ὥς ἀγάλματι καὶ θεῷ τοῖς παιδικοῖς). We saw above how Apuleius connects this Platonic kind of Icarianism to his philosophical enlightenment through aesthetic appreciation of his *sigillum*: such a statue of a god should remind Maximus of the ὑπερourάνιος τόπος.

However, when we encounter the magic- and sex-obsessed Lucius in *Metamorphoses* 3, longing to transform into a bird, it is difficult not to remember this winged soul of the inspired lover in the *Phaedrus*. Indeed, in our investigation of book 2, we will see Lucius treating his beloved, Photis, like a famous statue of a goddess – the Knidian Aphrodite – and in book 3, we will find him attempting to acquire wings from this erotic attachment. In fact, in his pursuit of a Platonic Icarian experience, Lucius enslaves himself to Photis, ordering that she bind him to her forever (*Met.* 3.22: *perpetuo pignera*) by making him winged (*perfice ut meae Veneri Cupido pinnatus assistam tibi*). If Lucius represents the ἐραστής and Photis the ἐρώμενος in the mirroring scene in 2.9, as I will demonstrate below, then Lucius, rather than growing wings from the power of specular reciprocity, actually becomes more attached to the things of the earth. That is, instead of sprouting feathers, in the manner of the philosophically enlightened soul of the *Phaedrus*, Lucius grows hooves. The soul, which in Platonic terms is given wings through erotic reciprocity, is in Lucius’ case further debased and given the lot of an animal. It is no coincidence, then, that Socrates describes the fate of particularly gluttonous (γαστριμαργία), insolent (ὑβρις), and drunken men (φιλοποσία) in the *Phaedo* as follows:

their souls fall into the bodies of asses (εἰς τὰ τῶν ὄνων γένη).⁴¹⁹ Lucius, in attempting to reach a kind of Icarian freedom, ends up becoming a more servile creature⁴²⁰ – one that corresponds to his notorious *serviles voluptates*.⁴²¹

If we look closer at the erotic seduction (2.7) and the fulfillment of the tryst (2.16-17) that bookend the *Haarspiegel*, respectively, there is a similar parodic reference to the feathered soul image. In a bewildering passage of the *Phaedrus*, in which Plato employs very corporeal and phallic language to describe the metaphysical experience of the enlightened soul, the feather of the soul is said to grow erect.⁴²² That is, the incorporeal soul (paradoxically) grows an immaterial erection from the sight of beauty, but somehow transcends the concerns of the body, longing for a metaphysical connection of sorts. In book 2, Lucius undergoes a faux-Platonic enlightenment similar to the incorporeal erection

⁴¹⁹ See *Phaed.* 81e. This is, in fact, a frequently cited reference for the Platonic reading of Lucius' metamorphosis. See Schlam 1970; DeFilippo 1990; and most recently, Tilg 2014.

⁴²⁰ See Fitzgerald 2000, 87-114 for a discussion of Lucius' asinine metamorphosis in terms of slavery. In particular, see 100, where he discusses how the ass is the most slavish of animals in literary terms: "Like the slave, the ass is the animal that is beaten. When the metamorphosed Lucius becomes an ass he exchanges his skin for a hide (*corium*). The Latin word not only denotes a type of body, it also connotes a particular relation of one body to the will or uses of another".

⁴²¹ See *Met.* 11.15. Cf. Graverini 2012, 51-132 for a really useful discussion of Lucius' "servile pleasures" and the problems that they have caused interpreters of the *Met.*

⁴²² See *Phaedr.* 251a7ff.: ἰδόντα δ' αὐτὸν οἶον ἐκ τῆς φρίκης μεταβολή τε καὶ ἰδρῶς καὶ θερμότης ἀήθης λαμβάνει: δεξάμενος γὰρ τοῦ κάλλους τὴν ἀπορροὴν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἐθερμάνθη ἢ ἡ τοῦ περοῦ φύσις ἄρδεται, θερμανθέντος δὲ ἐτάκη τὰ περὶ τὴν ἔκφυσιν, ἃ πάλαι ὑπὸ σκληρότητος συμμεμυκῶτα εἶργε μὴ βλαστάνειν, ἐπιρρυείσης δὲ τῆς τροφῆς ᾧδηςέ τε καὶ ὥρμησε φύεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς ρίζης ὁ τοῦ περοῦ καυλὸς ὑπὸ πᾶν τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς εἶδος: πᾶσα γὰρ ἦν τὸ πάλαι περωτὴ ("when he [the lover] sees him [the beautiful beloved], a change comes over him as if from shivering, and sweat and a strange fever take hold of him; for receiving through his eyes the flow of beauty with which the nature of the feather is nourished, he grows warm, and when he is warmed the places [on the soul] where the feathers sprout melt, [places] which long ago closed up from hardness and prevented sprouting, but with the nourishment flowing in, the quill of the feather became swollen and began to grow from the root under the whole form of the soul; for long ago it was entirely winged"). Translation adapted from Yunis 2011, 153 *ad loc.* The phallic language is particularly evident from the botanical metaphor in the word καυλός, the stem of a plant, which appears as early as the Hippocratic Corpus as a medical term for the phallus. See the entry for this term in Adams 1982, 26-7.

from gazing upon Photis, but in fact, ends up having a real erection. In response to viewing Photis' undulating bottom (*spinam mobilem*), Lucius says (*Met.* 2.7):

Isto aspectu defixus obstupui et mirabundus steti; steterunt et membra quae iacebant ante.

I was transfixed (*defixus*) by the sight, utterly stunned (*obstipui*). I stood in amazement, as did those parts of mine which were lying limp before.

This is not the only time we see Lucius “transfixed” (*defixus*); it happens to him both when he sees Pamphile transforming into a bird and again when the goddess Isis transforms him back into a man (11.14). This recurrent language does not merely create an intra-textual relationship and correspondence between these three characters (although it does do that). It also introduces a choice about the appropriate response to beauty, such as we saw in Lucian's *de Domo* in the previous chapter: can a viewer safely look upon beauty and long to become part of the sight or is it too dangerous?

The lover in the *Phaedrus*, upon seeing the sight of beauty on earth, is similarly dumbstruck with amazement at the sight and loses control of himself.⁴²³ The verb that is used there to express stupefaction – ἐκπλήσσειν – develops in later literature into a trope for a viewer's reaction to a realist work of art – ἐκπληξίς; this is, in turn, translated into Latin as *stupere*, which characterizes the affective experience of viewing beauty and art, such as, e.g., Narcissus experiences upon seeing himself in the mirror.⁴²⁴ And Lucius uses

⁴²³ See *Phaedr.* 250a6: αὐται δέ, ὅταν τι τῶν ἐκεῖ ὁμοίωμα ἴδωσιν, ἐκπλήττονται καὶ οὐκέτ' ἐν αὐτῶν γίγνονται, ὃ δ' ἔστι τὸ πάθος ἀγνοοῦσι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἰκανῶς διαισθάνεσθαι (“The souls, whenever they see something similar to the things there [i.e., the beauty they saw in the heavenly realms], they are struck out of their minds (ἐκπλήσσειν) and they are no longer in themselves, and they do not know what they are experiencing on account of insufficient perception”). Cf. Graverini 2010, who discusses the reaction of stupefaction and the out-of-body experience in the *Cupid & Psyche* episode as an allusion to this experience of the soul in the *Phaedrus*.

⁴²⁴ See Hardie 2002, 180, where he suggests that ἐκπληξίς is the Greek for the Latin *stupor*. See also p. 146, where Hardie compares Narcissus' stupefaction in response to his own beauty (*Met.* 3.418-19, a passage we

this verb (in the inchoative form *obstipesco*) to describe his own affective response of marvel at the sight of Photis' seductive movements. In other words, Lucius, in trying to follow the Platonic model of viewing beauty, believes that he is undergoing an internal experience of enlightenment and employs the same language for his encounter; however, his reaction is not in his soul and is not a process of recollection, as it is for the lover in the *Phaedrus*, but rather, a very corporeal reaction. His body displays a man ruled by his appetites.

Icarianism or metaphysical flight is not only restricted to a few key passages of the *Metamorphoses*, as scholarship on the novel has only recently recognized.⁴²⁵ In fact, it is a thematic signifier that permeates the entire novel, with Lucius continually misunderstanding and misconstruing the Platonic eschatological image. Winged-ness is at

will consider shortly) to the famous passage in the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas encounters a relief of himself. We may also compare this line in *Met.* 2.7 to *Aen.* 1.495 (*stupet obtutuque haeret defixus in uno*; "he is dumbstruck and transfixed, he doesn't move his face"). Lucius' scenes of stupefaction share a number of verbal resonances with this scene. But the point is not only that this is a trope that Apuleius participates in; rather, it is also a trope that can be traced back to the *Phaedrus* as one of the primary sources because the lover is responding with amazement to the likeness between the beloved and the Form of beauty.

⁴²⁵ See James 1998 who analyzes the theme of Icarianism in the *C&P* inset narrative and how it relates to Lucius' desire to acquire wings in the main story. By employing theoretical approaches from psychology and phenomenology of religion, such as Eliade's work on Shamanism and the universal cultural diffusion of the motif of magical flight, James argues that Apuleius is playing with the idea of magical flight and its connection to *Levis Amor*; but she focuses on places in the text where winged creatures like Cupid are paradoxically weighed down whereas embodied, earthbound creatures like Lucius and Psyche are trying to acquire lightness. Disembodiment, however, is necessary for the ecstatic kind of flight to happen for mortals and, in the Eliadean framework, the magical flight associated with Shamanism is a journey of the soul. While this is a very useful analysis for its creative account of less frequently discussed passages of the *Metamorphoses*, I would argue that we have recourse to a much simpler account for the obsession with wings in the *Metamorphoses*; a conflation of Platonic eschatological tropes from the *Phaedrus*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic* could account for the nexus of metaphors in the *Metamorphoses* about wings, disembodiment, the journey of the soul, and love. For instance, in the eschatological myth of the *Phaedo* – a dialogue that we know Apuleius translated into Latin (see Harrison 2000, 23) – Socrates famously likens human beings to fish: if a person could *become winged* (πτηνὸς γενόμενος ἀνάπτοιτο) and escape up to the upper realm, he would have a true vision of reality, just like a fish jumping above the surface of the sea for a brief moment (*Phaed.* 109e-110a1). Here, Plato borrows from the language of initiation, or religious *theoria* (θεωροῦσα), in order to describe an experience of the true heaven (ὁ ἀληθῶς οὐρανός) or the upper realm (cf. Nightingale 2004). It will be useful to keep this in mind as we encounter Apuleius' own conflation of initiatory language and philosophical enlightenment.

the root of Lucius' "Typhonic choice", in which he, like the Socrates of the *Phaedrus*, questions what kind of composite animal he is.⁴²⁶ But, whereas Socrates wonders whether he is a complicated beast similar to the Hesiodic Typhon and eventually arrives at the allegorical image of the winged-horse-charioteer-soul, Lucius continually questions whether or not he will become a winged-Pegasus while he is still an ass.⁴²⁷ That is to say, Lucius adopts an image from the *Phaedrus* that refers to a psychic state – in a similar manner to his misconstrual of the metaphysical soul's erection – and comically misapplies it to his ass-body, suggesting that he may still achieve flight in his asinine adventures.

The misinterpretation of Platonic ideas is, however, more than merely a parodic procedure in the *Metamorphoses*. In my view, Lucius does indeed represent an incompetent exegete of the Platonic texts. But this bad hermeneutics is heightened by Apuleius complicating Platonic models with alternative erotic models (e.g., from Latin elegy). A classic case of this occurs in the consummation of Lucius' desire for Photis in book 3, immediately after his encounter with the *Haarspiegel*. When Lucius grows tired (*Met.* 3.20: *mihi iam fatigo*) from the duration and intensity of his erotic tryst with Photis, he says that Photis "offer[s] a boyish bonus out of her generosity" (*de propria liberalitate Photis puerile obtulit corollarium*). As we will see later, "weariness" overcomes Psyche as well when she tries to achieve a Platonic flight by holding onto Cupid's leg (5.22: *fessa*); and many interpreters have recognized this moment in *C&P* as an explicit allusion to the soul in the *Phaedrus*, which falls to the earth after growing "heavy" or "weary" with forgetfulness

⁴²⁶ For Lucius' "Typhonic choice", see *Met.* 1.4; see also Jeffrey Winkle's analysis of this scene as it relates to the *Phaedrus* (Winkle 2011). On the *Nachleben* of Socrates' refusal to rationalize a myth (*Phaedr.* 229c6-230a7), particularly in the Second Sophistic, see Hunter 1997.

⁴²⁷ See *Met.* 6.30 and *Met.* 8.16. In book 11, too, Lucius sees an ass with wings glued onto its back in the train of Isis. He names it Pegasus and calls the sight laughable (see *Met.* 11.8).

and evil (*Phaedr.* 248c: λήθης τε καὶ κακίας πλησθεῖσα βαρυνθῇ).⁴²⁸ In the passage in question, though, Lucius, the ἐραστής figure, attempts to frame this as a truly Platonic encounter, where Photis takes on the position and gender of the Platonic ἐρώμενος. However, in the *Phaedrus*, it is the corrupted ἐραστής who attempts to mount the beloved in the manner of a quadruped (250e: τετράποδος νόμον βαίνειν) and is “not ashamed to pursue pleasure contrary to nature” (οὐδ’ αἰσχύνεται παρὰ φύσιν ἡδονὴν διώκων). Lucius thus becomes corrupted to the point of pretending Photis is a boy in order to derive more pleasure from the encounter; as a consequence of the affair, he is actually transformed into a quadruped.

This misreading of Plato also shows us a paradigmatic example of how Apuleius complicates an originally Platonic model with other competing models of erotic love. For instance, one of Martial’s epigrams (9.67) recounts an exhausting tryst with a particularly kinky or wanton (*lascivia*; cf. Photis’ “lasciviousness” on p. 20 below) girl. During this all night erotic encounter, the narrator grows tired (*fessus*; cf. *fatigo* in 3.20 and *fessa* in 5.22) from a thousand sexual positions and finally requests “that boyish” position (*illud puerile*; cf. *puerile...corollarium*), which the girl gives him without hesitation. Though Lucius frames his encounter as a Platonic ideal, a learned reader can decipher a failure to choose the correct erotic model in Lucius’ characteristic misconstrual of the original Platonic scene.

Perhaps most interestingly, it is also possible to see in Photis’ gender-bending a potential intertextual relationship with pseudo-Lucian’s discussion of Praxiteles’ famous

⁴²⁸ On this well-recognized allusion in *C&P*, see *GCA* 2004, 294. Again, see also James 1998, 37ff. for discussion of how Psyche’s attempt at Icarianism relates to Lucius’ own endeavors to acquire wings.

Knidian Aphrodite in the *Amores*, though it is difficult to say whether this text would have been accessible to Apuleius.⁴²⁹ In that scene, the girl-loving Charicles and the boy-loving Callicratidas visit the famous statue of the goddess, and a discussion of the sort popular in Second Sophistic Platonizing treatises⁴³⁰ ensues about how one should look at the goddess, that is, whether one should love boys or girls and whether one would take more pleasure at an erotic sight by looking from the front or from the back. The Knidian Aphrodite stands in a structure constructed to offer full-frontal and backside viewing⁴³¹; adopting the classic pose, she is said to “cover her private parts inconspicuously with one of her hands” (*Am.* 13: τῇ ἑτέρᾳ χειρὶ τὴν αἰδῶ λεληθότως ἐπικρύπτειν). Charicles, upon seeing the front of the statue, cries out a formulaic exclamation – “happiest of the gods is Ares” (εὐτυχέστατος ...θεῶν ὁ...Ἄρης); he then leaps upon the marble and begins to kiss the goddess with “importunate lips” (λιπαρέσι τοῖς χεῖλεσιν...κατεφίλει); Callicratidas, on the other hand, seems unimpressed until he sees her from behind and views “the boyish parts of the goddess” (*Am.* 14: ἐπεὶ τὰ παιδικὰ μέρη τῆς θεοῦ κατώπτειν). At that point, he cries out in his own fawning exclamation – “Heracles! What a rhythmically ordered back!” (Ἡράκλεις, ὅση μὲν τῶν μεταφρένων εὐρυθυμία); he likens her backside to Ganymede and makes a euphemistic metaphor about drinking the “sweeter” liquid poured from

⁴²⁹ See *Amores* 13-17. On issues of dating and authorship of the *Amores*, which scholars variously place from the 2nd to the 4th century, see Haynes 2013, 71. Buffière 1980 argues for a second century publication. Elsner 2007b makes an argument for the possibility that it is authentically Lucianic. If my reading of Apuleius can be pushed further, it would add to the argument in favor of an early dating (and possibly authenticity). Elsner 1991, 155-8 also has some helpful discussion of the scene more generally.

⁴³⁰ See the debates over the benefits of heterosexual versus pederastic love in Plutarch’s *Amatorius*, *Achilles Tatius* *L&C* 2.33-8, and this scene from the pseudo-Lucianic *Amores*. See the analysis of Hubbard 2009 and the dissertation of Michael Klabunde (Klabunde 2001).

⁴³¹ See the recent treatment of Melissa Haynes on the importance of the architecture for the viewing experience (Haynes 2013).

Ganymede's cup; and finally, he becomes "almost petrified from the excessive marvel" (ὕπὸ τοῦ σφόδρα θάμβους ὀλίγου δεῖν ἐπεπήγει).

If we return to the scene in the *Met.*, we may note that Lucius appears to view Photis from different angles at different times, fetishizing particular parts in the same way as these viewers who discuss the most pleasurable side of the statue to behold. If we look again at *Met.* 2.7, when Lucius first sees Photis, she is "shaking her nimble spine" (*spinam mobilem quatiens placide decenter undabat*; cf. τῶν μεταφρένων εὐρυθμία); gazing upon her backside, Lucius becomes stupefied (see above: *defixus obstupui et mirabundus*), gets an erection, and cries out in a formulaic exclamation:

‘Quam pulchre quamque festive’ inquam ‘Fotis mea, ollulam istam cum natibus intorques! Quam mellitum pulmentum apparas! Felix et certius beatus cui permiseris illuc digitum intingere!’

“How beautifully and charmingly”, I said, “my Photis, you twist that little pot with your buttocks! How sweet a stew you are preparing! Happy and more certainly blessed is he to whom you give permission to dip his finger in there!”

Experiencing exactly the same reaction that Callicratidas has, Lucius looks at Photis' backside – what he later refers to as her “boyish bonus” (*puerile...corollarium*; cf. ἐπεὶ τὰ παιδικὰ μέρη) –, makes an exclamation about the movement of her buttocks, and alludes to their tryst in a consumption metaphor.⁴³² It is at that point that Lucius ironically undergoes a Platonic kind of stupefaction and gazes into the *Haarspiegel* at the top of Photis' head.

A little later in book 2, however, Lucius is transformed from the boy-lover to the girl-lover, as he explicitly likens Photis to the Knidian Aphrodite at the fulfillment of his tryst. That is, at *Met.* 2.17, Photis lets her *hair* down and metamorphoses into the goddess:

⁴³² On the food metaphors in this scene, see Schmeling and Montiglio 2006.

Nec mora, cum omnibus illis cibariis vasculis raptim remotis, laciniis cunctis suis renudata, crinibusque dissolutis ad hilarem lasciviam in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum feminal rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia.

Without delay, with all the dishes and food suddenly snatched away, stripping herself of all her clothes, and letting her hair down for charming wantonness, she beautifully transformed herself into the guise of Venus who rose from the waves of the sea and she just barely hid her smooth-shaven pubes with her rosy palm, intentionally shadowing it rather than hiding it out of modesty.

Again, the Platonic model is blended with another tradition from art criticism, which reveals Lucius to be frenzied in his pursuit of a very physical pleasure. Moreover, after fetishizing Photis' hair in 2.9, Lucius' immediate reaction is identical to Charicles', namely to leap upon the object of his desire (2.10: *pronus in eam*) and plant a kiss on his favorite body part (*mellitissimum illud saviū impressi*).⁴³³

The fact that Lucius eulogizes Photis' body from different angles in a mock-Platonic enlightenment gets to the very heart of Lucius' role as a bad reader of Plato — contrary to Maximus' "diligent reading", we may note. What in Plato is meant to demonstrate the sublime effect of beauty on a lover and its ability to provide a transcendent encounter with the divine becomes in these Second Sophistic treatises a meditation on fetishizing various parts of the beloved's body. Whereas the lover in Plato worships his beloved "like a statue" (ὥς ἀγάλματι) — with Plato playing upon the associations of cult worship and the ἄγαλμα's power to make an absent god present⁴³⁴ — Apuleius' faux-Platonic lover transforms his beloved into a very specific statue, which has a history of

⁴³³ Psyche's parallel reaction to the sight of Cupid, where she "leans over him" (*prona in eum*) and plants kisses on him, explicitly describes the kisses as "passioned and impetuous" (*patulis ac petulantibus saviis*). If Apuleius was familiar with the passage from pseudo-Lucian, this phrase could be a translation of Charicles' λιπαρέσι τοῖς χεῖλεσιν.

⁴³⁴ See Nightingale 2004, 157-68; cf. Squire 2009, 117-20.

being fetishized for its particular parts. As we shall see in the next section, the most important piece of evidence for my claim that Apuleius presents Lucius as a bad reader of Plato lies in the fetishization of body parts that displace the locus of the beloved's identity. When we look at the mirroring encounter in the *Phaedrus*, we will see that the erotic reciprocity, which leads to a sublime encounter with divinity and an acquisition of self-knowledge, happens through the mirroring *eyes*. Indeed, as we already hinted at in chapter 1 with the reading of *Alcibiades I*, the eyes are the windows to the soul in Platonic erotics, and readers in the Second Sophistic most certainly understood this feature of Ἔρω⁴³⁵. That Lucius turns the beloved around – looking not into her mirroring eyes, but rather into her hair – accomplishes the same misinterpretation of Plato that Charicles' and Callicratidas' erotic responses to body parts does. After we consider the original Platonic text and its afterlife in antiquity (particularly in the Second Sophistic), we will turn to the *Haarspiegel*, where Apuleius reveals Lucius to be a fetishist masquerading as an ideal Platonic ἐραστής.

3: The Platonic Mirror of Ἔρω⁴³⁵ and its Nachleben in antiquity:

Now that we have seen some of the broader implications of the *Phaedrus* myth on the scenes surrounding the *Haarspiegel*, it is fitting to take a look at the particular mirroring scene that I propose is the primary intertext for *Metamorphoses* 2.9 and briefly consider its reception in later literature. At *Phaedrus* 255c1ff., Socrates describes the erotic encounter:

ἡ τοῦ ρεύματος ἐκείνου πηγὴ, ὃν ἕμερον Ζεὺς Γανυμήδους ἐρῶν ὠνόμασε, πολλὴ φερομένη πρὸς τὸν ἐραστήν, ἡ μὲν εἰς αὐτὸν ἔδω, ἡ δ' ἀπομεστούμενου ἔξω

⁴³⁵ On the eyes/face as mirrors of the metaphysical soul, see Morales 2004, 138-9.

ἀπορρεῖ· καὶ οἷον πνεῦμα ἢ τις ἡχὴ ἀπὸ λείων τε καὶ στερεῶν ἀλλομένη πάλιν ὅθεν ὠρμήθη φέρεται, οὕτω τὸ τοῦ κάλλους ῥεῦμα πάλιν εἰς τὸν καλὸν διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν, ἢ πέφυκεν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἰέναι ἀφικόμενον καὶ ἀναπτερῶσαν, τὰς διόδους τῶν πτερῶν ἄρδει τε καὶ ὠρμησε πτεροφυεῖν τε καὶ τὴν τοῦ ἐρωμένου αἰψὺν ψυχὴν ἔρωτος ἐνέπλησεν. ἐρᾷ μὲν οὖν, ὅτου δὲ ἀπορεῖ· καὶ οὐθ' ὅτι πέπονθεν οἶδεν οὐδ' ἔχει φράσαι, ἀλλ' οἷον ἀπ' ἄλλου ὀφθαλμίας ἀπολελαυκῶς πρόφασιν εἰπεῖν οὐκ ἔχει, ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρῶντι ἑαυτὸν ὁρῶν λέληθεν. καὶ ὅταν μὲν ἐκεῖνος παρῇ, λήγει κατὰ αὐτὰ ἐκεῖνον τῆς ὀδύνης, ὅταν δὲ ἀπῇ, κατὰ ταῦτα αἰψὺ ποθεῖ καὶ ποθεῖται, εἰδῶλον ἔρωτος ἀντέρωτα ἔχων· καλεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ οἶεται οὐκ ἔρωτα ἀλλὰ φιλίαν εἶναι.

The fountain (πηγή) of that stream which Zeus, when he was in love with Ganymede, named “desire” (ἵμερον) flows (ἀπορρεῖ) in abundance, being carried into the lover, and some [of it], when he is filled (ἀπομεστούμενου), overflows outside; and just as the wind or some echo bounces back from smooth, hard surfaces and is carried back whence it came, thus the stream of beauty travels back into the beautiful one through the eyes (διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν), through which [path] it enters into to the soul, where it stirs it up, waters the passages of the feathers and makes it grow wings, filling the soul of the beloved with love. So he is in love, but he is confused (ἀπορεῖ) about the object of his love; he neither understands what he is experiencing nor can he explain it; like one who has contracted an eye-disease from another, he is unable to give a reason for it; he does not realize that he is seeing himself in his lover as if in a mirror (ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρῶντι ἑαυτὸν ὁρῶν λέληθεν). And whenever the lover is with him, he is free from his pain as is his lover; but whenever the lover is absent, he feels a similar desire to his lover’s desire for him, and he has love’s image (εἰδῶλον), reciprocal love (ἀντέρωτα), within him; but he calls it, and believes it to be, not love, but friendship...

This passage opens with a reference back to one of Plato’s curious etymologies given at 251c6 – namely, desire (ἵμερος).⁴³⁶ Socrates, borrowing from Empedocles’ effluent theory of perception, implies that desire in its truest form nicely reflects its etymological combination of ἰέναι, μέρη, and ῥοή, which suggests that desire is a “flow” of particles that enters the eyes.⁴³⁷ According to this theory of optics, vision is conceived of as a form of

⁴³⁶ Cf. 251c5: ὅταν μὲν οὖν βλέπουσα πρὸς τὸ τοῦ παιδὸς κάλλος, ἐκεῖθεν μέρη ἐπιόντα καὶ ῥέοντα—ἃ δὴ διὰ ταῦτα ἵμερος καλεῖται—δεχομένη τὸν ἵμερον ἄρδηται τε καὶ θερμαίνεται, λωφᾷ τε τῆς ὀδύνης (“when it [the soul] looks upon the beauty of the boy and receives the particles which flow into it from there - for which reason they are called ‘desire’ - it is watered and warmed, and it ceases from its pain...”).

⁴³⁷ See Yunis 2011, 153. See Empedocles DK 31 A86.7, 87, B89, 109a.

penetration,⁴³⁸ which leads Frontisi-Ducroux to speculate that the swelling psyche looking upon the beautiful boy is, in fact, the phallus.⁴³⁹ That is the reason why Davidson, in elucidating the nuances of ἵμερος, describes it as follows: “*Himeros* has the effect of turning a passive object of desire into an innocent agent, and a subject of desire into an assault victim, attacked, penetrated through his eyes”.⁴⁴⁰ As this passage continues, we find more language of Empedoclean flow theory of perception: the fount or stream (πηγή) flows (ἀπορρεῖ) into the lover until it fills him up (ἀπομεστουμένου).

In addition to Empedoclean flow theory, though, Plato also borrows from atomist theories of vision in describing how the image (εἶδωλον) of the beloved appears in the eyes of the lover.⁴⁴¹ That is, when someone looks into another’s eyes, s/he can see a miniature reflection of himself or herself in the cornea of the person into whose eyes s/he is gazing.⁴⁴² From this physical phenomenon, the atomists’ theory of vision derived the notion of actual “air-imprints” (εἶδωλα) traveling through the air and entering the eye. Socrates implies, therefore, that the lover’s eyes are not just *like* a mirror (ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ), but they actually *are* mirrors because they return physical εἶδωλα to the beloved.

This elaborate discussion of the passage from the *Phaedrus* is primarily intended to demonstrate how important the eyes are for the ideal Platonic, erotic mirroring. The flow of beauty (ἡ τοῦ κάλλους ἀπορροή) with its connotation of penetration later inspires a trope in Second Sophistic discussions of the erotics of vision, which we see displayed, e.g., in

⁴³⁸ On penetrative models of optics and its relationship to sexuality, see Bartsch 2006.

⁴³⁹ See Frontisi-Decroux 1996, 95. On the interconnection between eye, phallus, and penetration, see Bartsch 2006, 115-182.

⁴⁴⁰ See Davidson 2007, 13.

⁴⁴¹ See again chapter 1, 16 n. 44.

⁴⁴² Cf. the discussion of the mirroring phenomenon between the eyes in *Alcibiades I*, in which the εἶδωλον is also called a κόρη (*Alc. I* 133a2, discussed in chapter 1).

Achilles Tatius' imitation of the erotic mirroring of the *Phaedrus*.⁴⁴³ In *Clitophon and*

Leucippe 1.9.4-5, Clinias explains to Clitophon why he is lucky to see Leucippe every day:

οὐκ οἶδας οἷόν ἐστιν ἐρωμένη βλεπομένη· μείζονα τῶν ἔργων ἔχει τὴν ἡδονήν. ὀφθαλμοὶ γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ἀντανακλώμενοι ἀπομάπτουσιν ὥς ἐν κατόπτρῳ τῶν σωμάτων τὰ εἶδωλα· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κάλλους ἀπορροή, δι' αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν καταρρέουσα, ἔχει τινὰ μίξιν ἐν ἀποστάσει· καὶ ὀλίγον ἐστὶ τῆς τῶν σωμάτων μίξεως· καινὴ γάρ ἐστι σωμάτων συμπλοκή.

You do not understand the value of the sight of the beloved: it yields more pleasure than the act itself. You see, when two pairs of eyes reflect in each other, they forge images of each other's bodies, as in a mirror. The effluxion of beauty floods down through the eyes to the soul, and effects a kind of union without contact. It is a bodily union in miniature, a new kind of bodily fusion.⁴⁴⁴

Whether or not this is primarily a reference to Plato's *Phaedrus* – a feature that Helen Morales⁴⁴⁵ among others calls into question – is not of concern for us. The number of important correspondences is certainly enough to conclude with the *communis opinio* that Plato is one of the most palpable intertexts with which this passage is engaging.⁴⁴⁶

Particularly attractive for us, though, is Goldhill's suggestion that “the discourse moves through its science, with a nod to ethical philosophy, toward a more familiar ‘ars amatoria’”.⁴⁴⁷ In the *Haarspiegel*, we shall see a similar kind of literary blending of Platonism and familiar models from elegy. What is particularly important to note is a peculiar lexical item Achilles Tatius quotes in his appropriation of the *Phaedrus* intertext:

ὥς ἐν κατόπτρῳ τῶν σωμάτων τὰ εἶδωλα. This phrase, “as in a mirror”, is translated into

⁴⁴³ Cf. also Plut. *Table Talk* 5.7.681a-c for another example of a Second Sophistic description of the penetrative flow of beauty.

⁴⁴⁴ See Morales 2004, 131 for translation. With this *Phaedrus*-inspired passage of *C&L*, cf. 5.13.4 (also analyzed by Morales): ἡ δὲ τῆς θεᾶς ἡδονὴ διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων εἰσρέουσα τοῖς στέρνοις ἐγκάθεται· ἔλκουσα δὲ τοῦ ἐρωμένου τὸ εἶδωλον ἀεὶ, ἐναπομάττεται τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς κατόπτρῳ καὶ ἀναπλάττει τὴν μορφήν· ἡ δὲ τοῦ κάλλους ἀπορροή δι' ἀφανῶν ἀκτίνων ἐπὶ τὴν ἐρωτικὴν ἐλκομένη καρδίαν ἐναποσφραγίζει κάτω τὴν σκιάν. Note the confluence of terms borrowed directly from the *Phaedrus* mirroring passage.

⁴⁴⁵ See Morales 2004, 130-5.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. also Goldhill 2001, who seems to split the difference between Platonism and Stoicism.

⁴⁴⁷ Goldhill 2001, 379.

Latin in the *Haarspiegel* scene in *Met.* 2.9, where Lucius describes the color (*color*) and sheen (*nitor*) of hair coming to meet the eyes “in the manner of a mirror” (*ad instar speculi*). The penetrating vision in Achilles Tatius’ description, moreover, strangely offers more pleasure to the beholder than actual penetration: μείζονα τῶν ἔργων ἔχει τὴν ἡδονήν. This sounds remarkably similar to the pleasure (2.8: *perfrui*) Lucius claims to receive through “exploring Photis’ appearance” at the opening of his encomium.⁴⁴⁸

It is also clear that Apuleius was aware of the intromissive model of vision and its penetrative capacity, as we can see, e.g., from the ‘Phaedra’ stepmother episode in *Metamorphoses* 10.3. In another strange blending of the ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος Platonic model with a famous scene from literature, a stepmother tries to seduce her son-in-law, setting off a chain of events. The stepmother describes the emotional effect the son-in-law has on her in the following way (*Met.* 10.3):

Causa omnis et origo praesentis doloris et etiam medela ipsa et salus unica mihi tute ipse es. Isti enim tui oculi per meos oculos ad intima delapsi praecordia meis medullis acerrimum commouent incendium.

You yourself are the entire cause and origin of my present pain, and also the very remedy and my only hope for deliverance. Those eyes of yours, having slipped through my eyes and deep into my innermost heart, are stirring up the most passionate fire in my marrow.

Note how this twisted version of erotic desire follows the Platonic pattern: the desire travels through the eyes (*per meos oculos*) into the deepest soul and sets it on fire (*incendium*).

⁴⁴⁸ It should be noted here (and will be discussed further later) that *perfrui* has a particularly erotic valence in this scene, making it appear like Lucius derives more enjoyment from the gaze than the act. See *GCA* 2001, 161 *ad. loc.*: “que faut-il entendre par là? Une fois rentré chez lui, Lucius rêve-t-il des belles chevelues rencontrées dans la rue et qui lui inspirent de tels éloges? Ou ramène-t-il ces belles cheveleus à la maison pour en jouir plus pleinement? Dans les *Met.*, *perfrui* est le plus souvent employé avec nuance érotique...”

Returning to the passage from the *Phaedrus*, there is another lexical item of particular interest, in part because Apuleius chooses to incorporate it in only one of the scenes of epiphany we will analyze and in part because it reverberates through different mirroring scenes in Greek and Latin literature before it reaches Apuleius. The verb *λανθάνω* appears in a paradoxical sense in the *Phaedrus* mirroring scene: the beloved “[does] not realize that he sees himself in the eyes of the lover as if in a mirror” (ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρῶντι ἑαυτὸν ὁρῶν *λέληθεν*). The process of unknowingly acquiring self-knowledge is compared to the bewildering effects of natural phenomena, such as a person catching a disease without realizing it at the time of contamination. The analogy may seem imprecise, but since the eyes were understood to have a tactile quality and to penetrate another person *through the eyes* (διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων), the language of contamination appears to be an appropriate way of speaking of the transfer of desire.

This lexical item, *λανθάνω*, becomes of particular importance for us as we trace this mirroring scene through Latin literature. This is one of the reasons, for instance, that many have seen the *Phaedrus* myth as intimately connected to the Narcissus myth of later treatments.⁴⁴⁹ Ezio Pellizer dubiously suggests that Plato had some insight into the deep mythic structure embedded in the Narcissus myth, citing as evidence the fact that Plato incorporates all of the narrative themes present in different manifestations of the Narcissus story.⁴⁵⁰ To be sure, the recurrence of the echo and the reflected countering-ἔρως image

⁴⁴⁹ See Bartsch 2006, 84 for the most reasonable assertion of the connection between the two myths.

⁴⁵⁰ See Pellizer 1989, 117-18: “Plato is, without doubt, principally interested in defining the *other* by means of studying the effects love produces on the self, whereas [the accounts of Narcissus] attempt rather to demonstrate the disastrous effects of refusing reciprocity, which produces a closure of the narcissistic circle of the self. One realizes, however, that in this impressive passage of Plato’s, the reappearance of the figure of ἀντίρως, of amorous reciprocity, of the self who merges with the other and then returns to the self, of this finding-once-more with this bounce-back the image of the echo and the mirror, serves as a summary, as

(ἀντέρως) together with the general themes of self-knowledge and erotics would appear suspiciously coincidental if these traditions were not linked.⁴⁵¹

Ovid's version of Narcissus – a figure we saw Apuleius prominently draw upon in chapter 2 of this dissertation – also provides an instance in which we encounter the triad of mirrors, ἔρως, and self-knowledge. The version in Ovid opens with the Theban prophet Tiresias telling Narcissus' mother the conditions under which he will grow to a ripe old age: “provided that he does not come to know himself” (*Met.* 3.348: *si se non noverit*). This seems like an inversion of the famous Delphic dictum γνῶθι σαυτὸν, which Bartsch argues may “represent an Ovidian play on the longstanding injunction to ‘know thyself’ that ran parallel to the mirror tradition in antiquity”.⁴⁵² It is generally agreed upon that the unifying philosophical thread of the *Phaedrus* is an investigation of the Delphic dictum.⁴⁵³ Ovid,

an inventory of the elements that constitute the system of meaning on which is based the theme of Narcissus in all its variations and narrative manifestations... The deep structures on which this has been articulated however, were already present in the mind of the philosopher who not infrequently amused himself by telling certain ‘myths’ that were no longer myths, but rather intentionally symbolic systems, elaborated in the space of very rich and organized thought, just as they had been present in the *imaginaire* that generated these stories in an unspecified and unspecifiable epoch, certainly before the time of Plato himself”.

⁴⁵¹ See Egan 2004, 149-50: “The Ovidian collocation of self-knowledge, self-love, repudiation of the love of others, auditory or echoic reciprocity, and specular reciprocity matches a constellation in the *Phaedrus*. To those shared elements we must also add the liquidity that links the eyes of the lover with those of his beloved in both works... Individually, any of these correspondences might be dismissed as unrelated instances of literary commonplaces, but the two matching collectivities of themes and motifs in the Narcissus texts and the *Phaedrus* can not easily be written off as coincidental”. Furthermore, it should be noted that in Pausanias’ account of Narcissus, the very same vocabulary of unrealized self-recognition appears. At 9.31.7, he says: ἐνταῦθά ἐστι Ναρκίσσου πηγὴ, καὶ τὸν Νάρκισσον ἰδεῖν ἐξ τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ φασίν, οὐ συνέντα δὲ ὅτι ἐώρα σκιάν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ **λαθεῖν τε αὐτὸν ἐρασθέντα αὐτοῦ** καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος ἐπὶ τῇ πηγῇ οἱ συμβῆναι τὴν τελευτήν. Note in particular the recurrence of λανθάνω, a word that will be significant for our treatment of Ovid’s Narcissus.

⁴⁵² See Bartsch 2006, 85. See also Taylor 2008, 59.

⁴⁵³ See Griswold 1986 for the seminal treatment of the issue. For the discrepancy between self-knowledge and other forms of contingent knowledge explored in the *Phaedrus*, see the illuminating treatment by Ferrari (Ferrari 1987, and in particular, pp. 9-12). See *Phaedr.* 229c7-230a9 for the famous passage where Socrates cites the Delphic oracle as the reason why he refuses to rationalize a myth.

therefore, playfully adopts the philosophical thread of the mirror in the *Phaedrus*, but adds a kind of ironic twist: Narcissus' goal is the lack of self-knowledge.

The verbal resonances seem apposite as well. In 3.463, Narcissus finally recognizes himself: *iste ego sum! Sensi, nec me mea fallit imago*. The phraseology of this line is actually borrowed from Vergil's bucolic imitation/blending of Theocritus' *Idylls* 6 and 11, in which the Cyclops sees his reflection in the sea and concludes that he is not terribly hideous looking.⁴⁵⁴ At *Ecl.* 2.25-7, Corydon says:

nuper me in litore uidi,
cum placidum uentis staret mare. non ego Daphnin
iudice te metuum, si numquam fallit imago.

I recently saw myself on the shore, when the sea stood placid from the winds.
And I would not fear Daphnis, with you as judge, if the image never lies.

Now, we can see how Ovid borrows the phrase *nec me mea fallit imago* from Vergil's Corydon. But, whereas Vergil's phraseology may be merely a playful adaptation of an important moment in *the* proto-bucolic text,⁴⁵⁵ Ovid's appropriation of the line in the *Phaedrus*, where the "beloved does not realize he is seeing himself as if in a mirror", functions quite differently. Vergil's text introduces a playful joke about the deceptiveness of reflections and embeds the philosophical position in a conditional (*si numquam...*); Ovid's version, on the other hand, emphatically states that the *imago* is not deceptive, or rather, does not possess the property of the verb *λανθάνω/fallo*.⁴⁵⁶ Egan notes how many of the later Narcissus narratives share this particular lexical item, *λανθάνω*; Narcissus in

⁴⁵⁴ See Theocr. *Id.* 6.35-8. Interestingly, this mirroring provides a kind of self-knowledge, but not in the Platonic or the Ovidian senses.

⁴⁵⁵ On the *Phaedrus* as a proto-bucolic text, see Haß 1998.

⁴⁵⁶ *TLL* (cf. II.B.1.a.add. part.) shows that *fallo* can be equivalent to *λανθάνω* as early as Horace and Livy.

other versions of the myth “does not realize” that he is seeing himself.⁴⁵⁷ But λανθάνω is translated ironically in Ovid’s version of Narcissus: we encounter a lover/beloved who, rather than unwittingly acquiring self-knowledge, does come to know himself – the same experience of self-knowledge that Plato’s ἐρώμενος undergoes – but in this case it does not escape his notice and that very fact is his downfall!

This triad of scenes comprises the antecedents, I maintain, that inspire Apuleius’ *Haarspiegel*, which adopts the Platonic model itself and proceeds to complicate it with other philosophical and literary alternatives. This becomes particularly clear with Ovid’s appropriation of Plato’s ἔρωσ/ἀντέρωσ tradition because immediately after Narcissus is fossilized as a statue from encountering his reflection, he admires his twin eyes and the divine likeness of his own hair (3.420-1):

spectat humi positus geminum, sua lumina, sidus
et dignos Baccho, dignos et Apolline crines.

Lying on the ground, he stares at the twin stars, his eyes,
and the hair worthy of Bacchus and worthy of Apollo.

One of the disconcerting features we will encounter in the *Haarspiegel* is the way in which Apuleius displaces the locus of identity from the eyes to the hair by suggesting that hair is the mirror of a person. In these two lines from Ovid, we may see one of the sources of Apuleius’ playful twist on the Platonic specular reciprocity. Narcissus, after consciously coming to know himself, admires his eyes and his hair as the two primary symbols of his striking beauty, suggesting that his hair in particular reminds him of divinity. While hair is not the mirror here, or even the means of the self-revelation, it is

⁴⁵⁷ See Egan 2004, 151. The two citations he offers are Pausanias 9.31.7 and a catoptric simile employed by the Byzantine rhetorician Nikephoros Basilikates (*Progymnasmata* 16.11-14).

nevertheless a symbol of some kind of divine encounter. Part of the joke in Ovid, however, is that Narcissus' specular encounter, which he likens to a revelatory experience of the gods, is a self-conscious delusion. But Narcissus, at least, is seeing an actual reflection of himself. When we meet Lucius, he confuses the hair with the mirror and he delights in a more extreme delusion. Apuleius adapts a tradition from Plato, which has already been refracted through these mirroring scenes in Latin literature, but comically twists it, skipping over the eyes and gazing directly at the hair.

4. Close Reading of the *Haarspiegel* of *Metamorphoses* 2.9:

When we first encounter the *Haarspiegel*, it occurs in an extended *Encomium of Hair* that should be read in the contemporary tradition of Second Sophistic rhetorical practices. Lucius, in his flirtation with Photis, refuses to leave before he “explores” her entire aspect (*Nec tamen ego prius inde discessi quam diligenter omnem eius explorassem habitudinem* - *Met.* 2.8). It is tempting to see already at the outset of the encomium a euphemism in the use of the word *explorare* (discussed in chapter 1), which can be used either of seeing or touching⁴⁵⁸: Apuleius may be playing upon the erotic and penetrative power of the gaze in Lucius' vision of Photis. The only description he shares with his readers, however, is that of his sole care (*unica cura*): hair. Lucius then elaborates on his general practice when he encounters a particularly nice head of hair: “to look at it first publicly and then later to enjoy it at home” (*puplice prius intueri et domi postea perfrui*).

⁴⁵⁸ See *TLL* II.B.2.B.b *videndi* and *TLL* II.B.2.B.c *tangendi*. A usage of particular interest occurs in Aug. *De civ. Dei* 1.18, in which Augustine discusses how one can be contaminated by another's lust; at one point, he explains how a virgin is contaminated or corrupted through the exploring (*explorare*) of a midwife.

As suggested above, the verb *perfruor* possesses a particularly erotic connotation, used elsewhere in the novel of sexual delight.⁴⁵⁹ Indeed, we should keep this word in mind when we later see Lucius *enjoying* the sight of Isis in book 11.

After offering this odd justification for his ensuing eulogy, Lucius introduces a curious thought experiment: take the most beautiful woman in the world, even Venus herself together with all of her attendants and adornments, strip her of her hair, and she could not attract anyone, not even Vulcan.⁴⁶⁰ Lucius then concludes his encomium in *Metamorphoses* 2.9 with the *Haarspiegel*, a sparkling example of epideictic rhetoric:

Quid cum capillis color gratus et nitor splendidus inlucet et contra solis aciem uegetus fulgurat uel placidus renitet aut in contrariam gratiam uariat aspectum et nunc aurum coruscans in lenem mellis deprimitur umbram, nunc coruina nigredine caeruleus columbarum colli flosculos aemulatur, uel cum guttis Arabicis obunctus et pectinis arguti dente tenui discriminatus et pone uersum coactus amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiorem?

What is it like when hair has a pleasing color and its brilliant luster shines and it flashes lively against the rays of sun or softly reflects or changes its appearance for an opposite charm; now gleaming gold it is compressed into the smooth shadow of honey, now dark blue with raven-black it imitates the little flowers on pigeons' necks; or when it is anointed with Arabian myrrh and parted with a sharp comb's fine tooth and gathered at the back, it comes to meet the lover's eyes and just like a mirror returns a more pleasing image (*amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiorem*)?

⁴⁵⁹ See, e.g., 9.28. cf. Cic. *de fin.* 1.57, where *perfruor* is used of enjoying Epicurean *voluptates*. See also Adams 1982, 198, who has a discussion of the sexual valences of the verb *fruor*. Cf. GCA 2001, 161 *ad loc.* (see n. 448 above).

⁴⁶⁰ *Met.* 2.8: *At vero (quod nefas dicere, ne quid sit ullum huius rei tam dirum exemplum) si cuiuslibet eximiae pulcherrimaeque feminae caput capillo spoliaveris et faciem nativa specie nudaveris, licet illa caelo deiecta, mari edita, fluctibus educata—licet, inquam, Venus! ipsa fuerit, licet omni Gratiarum choro stipata et toto Cupidinum populo comitata et balteo suo cincta, cinnama fragrans et balsama rorans, calva processerit, I placere non poterit nec Vulcano suo.*

The fact that this passage participates in the *Encomium of Hair* tradition popular in the Second Sophistic should be clear with only a cursory glance at the stylistic features.⁴⁶¹

Some have read this scene strictly as a display of epideictic rhetoric, parallel to other *ekphraseis* in the novel and in the same vein as the *laus speculi* in the *Apologia*.⁴⁶² More recently, others have explicated this display piece with more sensitivity to the generic interplay that is woven into it.⁴⁶³

Ellen Finkelpearl, for example, has usefully read this scene in light of allusions to the Vergilian Circe and to the elegiac beloved.⁴⁶⁴ In her reading, the phrase *pectinis arguti dente tenui discriminatus* – an explicit verbal allusion to a passage in book 7 of the *Aeneid* in which the Trojans encounter Circe singing and weaving⁴⁶⁵ – is meant to engage with the Augustan poets' ever-present obsession with slight poetry as signaled by the key word of Callimachean poetics (*tenuis*). Finkelpearl further illuminates various interplays with elegiac women and the adornment (excessive or lacking) of their hair: Propertius hates the cosmetics that Cynthia employs to allure others with cheap tricks and prefers that she stay natural⁴⁶⁶; similarly Ovid tells Corinna to stop adorning her hair because her natural hair

⁴⁶¹ The passage opens with a flashy combination of parallelism and homoeoteleuton (*color gratus et nitor splendidus*), it is strewn throughout with *figura etymologica* (*nitor-renitet*) and *variatio*, and even at the level of syllables, the parallelism often reaches a perfect balance (e.g. *vegetus fulgurat vel placidus renitet* - 3 syllable adj., 3 syllable verb, 3 syllable adj., 3 syllable verb). See GCA 2001, 172 for discussion on this particular rhetorical display.

⁴⁶² See Sandy 1994, 1568-69; cf. Englert and Long 1973.

⁴⁶³ See Schmeling and Montiglio 2006.

⁴⁶⁴ See Finkelpearl 1998, 62-7.

⁴⁶⁵ *Aen.* 7.11-14 *ubi Solis filia lucos/ adsiduo resonat cantu tectisque superbis/urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum,/ arguto tenuis percurrens pectine telas*. Note also that Apuleius has used the somewhat rare words *pecten* and *argutus* found in this passage of Vergil. Moreover, the connection with Photis and Circe has been pointed out by numerous people. See Finkelpearl 1998, 63; cf. Montiglio 2005, 58-61 who reads Lucius' description of Photis' hair as an expansion on the Homeric epithet, *καλλιπλόκαμος*, applied to Circe.

⁴⁶⁶ Prop. 1.2.1-4: *Quid iuvat ornato procedere, vita, capillo/ et tenuis Coa veste movere sinus,/ aut quid Orontea crinis perfundere murra,/ teque peregrinis vendere muneribus*.

should bring her praise.⁴⁶⁷ While these allusions provide stylistic statements in Finkelpearl's analysis,⁴⁶⁸ paradoxically promising an unadorned stylistic flourish (*inordinatus ornatus*), there is much more to be said for the generic richness of the passage as well as the cultural and philosophical import. If my reading of the Platonic allusion is correct, what does it mean that Apuleius combines elegiac tropes and allusions to Circe with an earlier Platonic ἔρωσ/ἀντέρωσ tradition? That is, how does the elegiac, lover/dominatrix heterosexual encounter complicate the primary intertext, the idealized, homoerotic mirroring between ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος? Moreover, how much was the original Platonic model already contaminated by the Ovidian Narcissus? Lucius once again functions as a kind of ἐραστής figure and Photis an ἐρώμενος, but the erotic encounter is a comically twisted version of an idealized Platonic relationship viewed through the lens of Ovid's ironic appropriation of Plato's specular reciprocity. Lucius, while fashioning himself to be an ideal Platonic viewer, is eventually revealed to be a self-deluded, narcissistic slave to Photis through the dense matrix of intertexts.

Keeping these issues in mind, let us look back at the eulogy in *Metamorphoses* 2.9 and analyze the language more closely. As we are led through the encomium, the *Haarspiegel* is anticipated by an elaborate *ekphrasis* of hair. If we recall the contrast drawn in *Apologia* 14 between mimetic representation and the natural image of the mirror, we can see a number of verbal resonances between that passage and our passage in the

⁴⁶⁷ *Amores* 1.14 opens: *dicebam "medicare tuos desiste capillos."* Ovid concludes the poem (1.14.56) with the promise that Corinna will find praise for her natural hair – *postmodo nativa conspiciere coma*. The word *nativus* is of particular importance in Finkelpearl's analysis as it only occurs here (*Met.* 2.8) and in one other place in the Apuleian corpus, further strengthening the intertextual connection.

⁴⁶⁸ See Finkelpearl 1998, 66: "I believe that Apuleius is here aware of the implications for the Augustan poetic program inherent in the passages he uses, and that he understands that Vergil is saying something about weaving slight poetry and that Ovid and Propertius are using their women to express, however contradictorily, a belief in some sort of plain style. Apuleius, however, is not entirely of their school."

Metamorphoses. First of all, *color* is one of the qualities that is lacking in artistic representation, and therefore, a facet in which mirroring surpasses regular *mimesis*. An important feature of the *Haarspiegel* formulation lies in the phrase *uariat aspectum*. Just as we saw with the diachronic mirror in chapter 2, hair changes over time and under varying intensities of light – a fact that is emphasized by the rather intricate tri-colon of temporal phrases (*nunc...nunc...cum...*), in which hair mimics different natural phenomena at different times.⁴⁶⁹

When we finally encounter the *Haarspiegel* analogy, it is introduced with the curious phrase *amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiorem*. This line, I maintain, provides the crux of the entire encomium and, in characteristic Apuleian style, weaves together multiple generic traditions and philosophical tropes. While we have noticed a deep engagement with elegy as one of the primary genres that Apuleius comically incorporates, I suggest that the phrase *amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi* is actually a translation of that very famous moment in the *Phaedrus*, when the “beloved does not realize that he sees himself in the eyes of the lover as if in a mirror” (*Phaedr.* 255d: ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρῶντι ἑαυτὸν ὁρῶν λέληθεν). In particular, we saw above how the phrase ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ was picked up by other Second Sophistic writers, such as Achilles Tatius, in passages on the erotics of vision; Plutarch in his *Amatorius* also adapts this phrase when discussing the way in which the οἱ πολλοί

⁴⁶⁹ One may compare the temporal markers and their relationship to color change with Philostratus’ overwrought description of the birth of Athena in *Imagines* 2.27. See, e.g., 2.27.3: τὴν δὲ ὕλην τῆς πανοπλίας οὐκ ἂν συμβάλοι τις, ὅσα γὰρ τῆς ἱριδος χρώματα παραλλαττούσης ἐς ἄλλοτε ἄλλο φῶς, τοσαῦτα καὶ τῶν ὀπλῶν (“As for the material of her panoply, no one could guess it; for as many as are the colors of the rainbow, which changes its light now to one hue and now to another, so many are the colors of her armor”, translation Platt 2011, 5). For discussion of epiphany in *ekphrasis*, see Platt 2011, 1-7. But, here, we may liken the temporal phraseology of ἐς ἄλλοτε ἄλλο φῶς to the *nunc...nunc...cum* of Apuleius’ *ekphrasis*.

pursue a false reflection of love.⁴⁷⁰ Apuleius renders this particular phrase into Latin with the gloss *ad instar speculi* to allude manifestly to the primary intertext of the *Phaedrus*.

The next part of the phrase for us to consider is the line *amatoris oculis occurrens*. It has been noted that the word *amator* has an elegiac resonance that ironically foreshadows the initiation to Isis, at which time Lucius will be freed from his more appetitive desires, his *serviles voluptates*.⁴⁷¹ I maintain, however, that the phrase blends two lines from the scene in the *Phaedrus*. Recall how the flow of beauty “goes through the eyes” (διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἰόν) and ultimately warms the soul of the ἐρώμενος, inspiring in him a counter-ἔρωσ-image of ἔρωσ (εἶδωλον ἔρωτος ἀντέρωτα). I propose that *oculis occurrens* provides a Latin gloss on the phrase διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων – a phrase we also encountered in the Achilles Tatius passage; simultaneously, the phrase incorporates the ἀντ-prefix of ἀντέρως with the *ob-* embedded in *occurro*, a prefix that Apuleius will playfully employ again in the very last sentence of the novel. While *oculis occurrens* is not an uncommon construction,⁴⁷² it seems uncanny that a woman’s hair possesses the visual (and penetrative) power to enter the eyes of the lover – *amator* (a Latin gloss on ἐραστής)⁴⁷³ – and return an *imago* (a translation of the Greek εἶδωλον). Indeed, this collocation of particularly *Phaedran* words and motifs would likely have recalled in the mind of the educated ancient reader this famous Platonic mirroring scene.

Even down to the precise phraseology, therefore, Lucius fashions himself to be an ideal Platonic ἐραστής, imagining that the bright sheen from Photis’ hair penetrates his

⁴⁷⁰ Plut. *Amat.* 765f7f.: ἀλλ’ οἱ πολλοὶ μὲν ἐν παισὶ καὶ γυναιξὶν ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτροις εἶδωλον αὐτοῦ φανταζόμενον διώκοντες καὶ ψηλαφῶντες οὐδὲν ἡδονῆς μεμιγμένης λύπη δύνανται λαβεῖν βεβαιότερον·

⁴⁷¹ See *GCA* 2001, 176 *ad loc.*: “ce mot, qui évoque la poésie élégiaque sous-jacente à cette éloge, surprend dans la bouche d’un initié d’Isis, censé avoir renoncé aux plaisirs de la chair”.

⁴⁷² See *TLL* II.A.3.B.1.a. See also Tac. *Ann.* 16.13; Sen. *Nat. Quaest.* 14.4.

⁴⁷³ See *TLL* GLOSS.

eyes like the flow of beauty and warms his soul. But he characteristically misunderstands the transcendent effect of the interchange of desire and he comically does not even realize that he is supposed to acquire self-knowledge from this encounter. Even Ovid's Narcissus was aware of the elusive nature of the *imago*. Ovid preserves the lexical item *fallo* but twists it to fulfill Tiresias' prophecy: Narcissus acquires self-knowledge wittingly. Lucius abandons the "unwitting" nature of the revelation – the lexical item *λανθάνω* – in this scene, and suggests rather that the *Haarspiegel* "returns a more pleasing image" (*reddit imaginem gratiorem*).

This invites the question: more pleasing than what? In fact, this "more pleasing" image sounds strikingly close to the "greater pleasure" (μείζονα...τὴν ἡδονήν) a lover experiences from merely looking at the beloved in Achilles Tatius' model of erotics (see pp. 208-9 above). But the lover in Achilles Tatius takes his pleasure from looking into the beloved's eyes and experiencing an erotic exchange of desire διὰ τῶν ὀμμάτων akin to the *Phaedran* model. Lucius, on the other hand, takes his pleasure (*perfrui*) from the back of his beloved's head. This represents a fantastic twist on the Platonic self-knowledge tradition, in as much as Lucius' encounter with Photis' hair somehow does manage to deceive him and transform him into a fetishist. Presumably, since Lucius is looking into the mirror of Photis' hair, he ought to see himself; but the self that he encounters is a more pleasing version of himself. Whereas Plato's ἐρώμενος has an unwitting revelation about the self and Ovid's Narcissus endures a pure, unmediated self recognition, Lucius, in a fully aware state (or so Apuleius has us believe), recognizes that the vision he experiences is better than the real thing and he delights in the delusion. This depiction of Lucius as a mock-ἐραστής hiding a fetishist's delusion under philosophical pretense becomes even

more condemning when we see Lucius feeding his appetites immediately after his transcendent vision. Lucius' fetish for hair, which betrays a misunderstanding of Plato insofar as it displaces the locus of identity from the eyes to the back of Photis' head, thus represents multiple levels of delusion. If we realize that Lucius fancies himself to be an ideal Platonic ἐραστής but appears in his tryst with Photis to be a corrupted ἐραστής, or even worse, an insatiable sex-addict from one of Martial's epigrams, we cannot help but come back to this picture when we see Psyche behave in precisely the same way at the sight of Cupid's hair. When we come to the end of the novel, moreover, and find Lucius looking into the mirror in Isis' headdress, we are once again given a readerly choice. We can interpret Lucius as an Ovidian Narcissus figure, descending further into a willing delusion; or we can say that Apuleius has turned the beloved around and faced her in the right direction, as it were. Lucius still focuses on the goddess' hair, as he gives us an even richer encomium of it. But, rather than fetishizing the goddess from behind – appearing similar to the viewers in pseudo-Lucian's *Amores* discussing whether to gaze from the front or back – Lucius does stand face-to-face with the goddess.

5: *Metamorphoses* 5.22-4: *The Recognition Scene*:

Although the formal recurrence of the *Haarspiegel* formula is postponed until we encounter Isis in book 11, the epiphany scene in the *C&P* inset narrative in which Psyche first gazes upon Cupid forms an intra-textual bridge between the passages in book 2 and book 11 and reminds us that the Platonic ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος model of erotic reciprocity is still one of the persistent questions for our interpretation of the text. At the most basic

level, this is a recognition scene in which the beholder experiences an encounter with the divine embodiment of ἔρως and attempts to experience a kind of Platonic flight of the soul. Many scholars have noticed that Psyche seeks a Platonic journey of the soul, for instance, when she grabs hold of Cupid's leg.⁴⁷⁴ When the god awakes and flits up (*avolavit*) into the sky, Psyche attempts to stay with him and thereby experience Icarian flight into the upper region akin to the journey of the soul in the *Phaedrus*. Psyche, however, much like the winged soul of the *Phaedrus*, which becomes weighed down with concerns and cares of this world, grows weary and falls back to the earth (*tandem fessa delabitur solo*).⁴⁷⁵ This allegorical version of Platonic flight may remind us also of Lucius' physical weariness in his prolonged tryst with Photis, which represents Lucius' own attempt at Platonic flight.

While this is most certainly a reference to the *Phaedrus*, the significance of the entire μῦθος of the *Phaedrus* has been under-appreciated in the scholarship. If we can re-evaluate the recognition scene by understanding it as another misconstrued ἐραστής encounter with beauty, then we can begin to realize how *C&P* as a whole reveals another kind of reversal of the Platonic mythic journey of the soul. That is, Psyche begins her mortal life by being worshipped as a divinity. However, rather than experiencing the ἀνάβασις of the enlightened soul – such as the soul who escapes in the *Republic's*

⁴⁷⁴ See Walsh 1970, 206-7; Kenney 1990b, 184-5; *GCA* 2004, 294-7 for a summary of scholarship on this scene. Specifically, at 294: “The description of Psyche, unable to follow Cupid who flies away on his wings, and falling down to earth, no doubt refers to Plato's *Phaedrus* 248c, where Socrates explains the fact that those souls who cannot follow in the train of a god and fall to earth”. See Winkle 2011 for the *Phaedrus* in the *Met.* more broadly.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. *Phaedr.* 248c: ἥτις ἂν ψυχὴ θεῶ συνοπαδὸς γενομένη κατίδῃ τι τῶν ἀληθῶν, μέχρι τε τῆς ἐτέρας περιόδου εἶναι ἀπήμονα, κἂν αἰεὶ τοῦτο δύνηται ποιεῖν, αἰεὶ ἀβλαβῆ εἶναι· ὅταν δὲ ἀδυνατήσασα ἐπισπέσθαι μὴ ἴδῃ, καὶ τινι συντυχίᾳ χρησαμένη λήθῃς τε καὶ κακίας πλησθεῖσα βαρυνθῇ, βαρυνθεῖσα δὲ πεπορρωμένη τε καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν πέσῃ...

Allegory of the Cave – she undergoes a κατάβασις to the underworld, driven on a quest by *vulgaris Venus*. If Psyche herself is an allegory for Lucius, then her inverted Platonic journey of the soul will also mirror Lucius’ misguided odyssey. Or to phrase it differently, Lucius is given a Platonizing myth about love and the journey of the soul – spoken by an anti-Platonic, drunken mock-Diotima figure – which legitimizes his own program of Platonic misinterpretation in the earlier books: “Soul”, similarly to Lucius, misconstrues her visual encounter with “Love”, and fetishizes his hair and his body parts.

When Psyche first brings the lamp into her bedroom in the hopes of catching a glimpse of her mysterious husband, she feels the same emotions that the ἐραστής first experiences upon seeing divine beauty – fear at the sight (*tanto aspectu deterrita*) and madness (*impos animi*).⁴⁷⁶ But again, with a lack of restraint similar to the corrupted lover of the *Phaedrus*, Psyche cannot control her lust for Cupid. The first aspect of his beauty that she notices is his hair, which the old woman narrator describes with the following encomium:

Videt capitis aurei genialem caesariem ambrosia temulentam, ceruices lacteas genasque purpureas pererrantes crinium globos decoriter impeditos, alios antependulos, alios retropendulos, quorum splendore nimio fulgurante iam et ipsum lumen lucernae uacillabat; per umeros uolatilis dei pinnae roscidae micanti flore candicant et quamuis alis quiescentibus extimae plumulae tenellae ac delicatae tremule resultantes inquieta lasciuiunt; ceterum corpus glabellum atque luculentum et quale peperisse Venerem non paeniteret.

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. *Phaedrus* 251b for the description of the ἐραστής looking upon true beauty: ὅταν θεοειδὲς πρόσωπον ἴδῃ κάλλος εὖ μεμιμημένον ἢ τινα σώματος ιδέαν, πρῶτον μὲν ἔφριξε καὶ τι τῶν τότε ὑπῆλθεν αὐτὸν δειμάτων, εἶτα προσορῶν ὡς θεὸν σέβεται, καὶ εἰ μὴ ἔδεδίει τὴν τῆς σφόδρα μανίας δόξαν, θύοι ἂν ὡς ἀγάλματι καὶ θεῷ τοῖς παιδικοῖς. The confluence of fear, shuddering, and worship is palpable in this scene from *C&P*. Also, note the paradox in this phrase *impos animi*: soul is out of control of the soul. Cf. Graverini 2010, who is the only scholar, as far as I can tell, to recognize this intertextual connection with the *Phaedrus*.

She sees the pleasant hair of his golden head drenched in ambrosia; (she sees) curls of hair wandering over his milky neck and purple cheeks, beautifully arranged, some hanging in front, some behind, and with their excessive brightness already shining, the lamplight itself also wavered. Along the shoulders of the god who flies, white wings gleam dewy in the manner of a glistening flower, and even with the wings at rest, the soft and delicate little down-feathers ripple tremulously and restlessly play. The rest of the god's body is smooth and splendid – just the sort that Venus would not be ashamed to have given birth to.

I have retained the bold syllables from Braund's useful close reading of this scene because it highlights the rhetorical delight with which Apuleius composed this passage, clearly demonstrating that it belongs in the same category as Photis' *Haarspiegel*.⁴⁷⁷ The dense texture of the description is amplified by the repetition of particular sounds and syllables (such as em, am, [m]ul, asque, ur, gl, lu, ll, can[t]), and as Braund points out, the number of liquids in this passage involves an "elaborate use of the tongue when reading the text aloud".⁴⁷⁸ While Braund argues that the delicate construction of this scene is meant to stop time for the reader, I suggest that the highly wrought description is composed in such a way as to emphasize that this critical moment in *C&P*, a recognition scene where the "Soul" encounters the beauty of Eros, recalls the *Haarspiegel* of 2.9. I reproduce the passage of 2.9 here in order to compare some of the sonic and syllabic similarities (in bold):

Quid cum capillis color gratus et nitor splendidus **inlucet** et **contra** solis aciem uegetus **fulgurat** uel placidus renitet aut in **contrariam** gratiam uariat aspectum et nunc aurum coruscans in **lenem** mellis deprimitur umbr**am**, nunc coruina nigredine caerul**us** columbarum colli flosculos aemulatur, uel cum guttis Arabicis obunctus et pectinis arguti dente **tenui** discriminatus et pone uersum coactus amatoris oculis **occurr**ens ad instar speculi reddit imagin**em** grati**orem**? Quid cum frequenti subole spissus **cumulat** uertic**em** uel prolixa serie porrectus dorsa permanat? Tanta denique est capillamenti dignitas ut qu**amuis** auro ueste gemmis

⁴⁷⁷ See Braund 1999, 182.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

omnique cetero mundo exornata **mulier** incedat, **tamen**, nisi capillum distinxerit, ornata non possit audire.

Moreover, although there is no explicit mirror mentioned in Psyche's vision of Cupid, if we look closely at the description of the hair, we can see features that this *ekphrasis* shares with Photis' *Haarspiegel*. The pastiche of colors blended together at one particular moment (*capitis aurei... lacteas genasque purpureas*) parallels the way in which the *color* of hair in 2.9 changes over time (cf. *variat aspectum*). Second, Cupid's hair, like Photis', is arranged in various knots, some hanging down in front, some in back (*crinium globos decoriter impeditos, alios antependulos, alios retropendulos*), but nevertheless, *decoriter*.⁴⁷⁹ Third, the *splendor* and *fulgor* of Cupid's hair is so powerful that it causes the lamp (*lumen lucernae*) to flicker; similarly, in the encomium of hair, the *nitor splendidus* shines against the ray of the sun (*contra solis aciem vegetus fulgurat*), vying, in a sense, with the light source. Lastly, rather than appearing similar to bird-plumage, Cupid actually possesses his own plumage, which jumps around wantonly (*plumulae tenellae ac delicatae tremule resultantes inquieta lasciuiunt*) like the sparrows in Venus' cortège.⁴⁸⁰

Now that we have seen how the rich texture of the narrator's encomium of Cupid's hair closely connects it to Photis' *Haarspiegel*, it is important to see what effect this mystical sight has on the beholder(s). As we saw above, immediately after Lucius concludes the encomium of Photis' hair, he explains how he cannot control himself, but leaning over (*pronus in eam*) Photis, he plants the sweetest kiss on the hair of her head

⁴⁷⁹ Cf. 2.9 where Photis' hair is *cervice dependulos ac dein per colla dispositos...paulisper ad finem conglobatos*.

⁴⁸⁰ Cf. 6.6: *lasciuiunt passerres*.

(*qua fine summum cacumen capillus ascendit, mellitissimum illud saviu[m] impressi*).

Psyche has a nearly parallel experience: she cannot restrain herself, but is driven wild with curiosity (*insatiabili animo...satis et curiosa*) and attacks Cupid with “passioned and impetuous kisses” (*patulis ac petulantibus saviis*). Lucius, with the tension growing from the long period of flirtation, tells Photis in a clear phallic reference that his bow has been taut ever since he “felt cruel Cupid’s arrow plunge into the depths of (his) heart” (2.16: *ubi primam sagittam saevi Cupidinis in ima praecordia mea delapsam excepi*).⁴⁸¹ Psyche, on the other hand, incidentally pricks herself with one of Cupid’s arrows because she is trembling excessively. In another clear euphemism for sexual intercourse,⁴⁸² Psyche fetishizes her husbands “weapons”, which leads to the paradoxical climax of the *C&P* tale:

Sic ignara Psyche sponte in Amoris incidit amorem. Tunc magis magisque cupidine fragrans Cupidinis prona in eum efflictim inhians patulis ac petulantibus saviis festinanter ingestis de somni mensura metuebat.

In this way, Psyche willingly (though unwittingly) fell in love with Love. Then more and more on fire with desire for Desire, she leaned over him gazing passionately, and quickly covering him with wanton open-mouthed kisses, she was afraid that he might wake up.⁴⁸³

These playful lines allude to the *Phaedrus* in a way that commentators of the *Metamorphoses* have failed to notice. Recall how the ἐρώμενος is described in the mirroring scene: ὥσπερ δὲ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ἐν τῷ ἐρῶντι ἑαυτὸν ὁρῶν λέληθεν. The lexical oddity λανθάνω, highlighting the paradox of unconscious self-knowledge, recurs here in

⁴⁸¹ We should note here the verbal resonances here that imply a penetrative theory of vision. Recall how in the Phaedra-esque episode in book ten, the eyes slip down (*delapsus*) into the deepest heart (*ad intima...praecordia*).

⁴⁸² *Met.* 5.23: *ut per summam cutem roraverint parvulae sanguinis rosei guttae*. Cf. Braund 1999, 183, who suggests that this phrase “can be read proleptically as a metaphor for ejaculated semen”.

⁴⁸³ Here, I have retained some of the word play from the translation in Kenney 1990a, 77.

what Kenney calls a “pointed oxymoron”.⁴⁸⁴ The phrase *ignara...sponte*, I propose, provides the final clue that we are meant to see here the same mirroring that occurs between Lucius and Photis in 2.9, that of the ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος. That is, a lexical item, which is present in the *Phaedrus* and all of the depictions of Narcissus but curiously absent from the Lucius-Photis *Haarspiegel*, is added to this strange scene of illumination through a vision of beauty.

Moreover, although there is no proper mention of the *speculum* in this moment of epiphany, there is verbal mirroring nonetheless. Psyche’s reaction mirrors the appearance and designation of the god; this is the first time that Cupid is explicitly named in the *C&P* narrative but, as Kenney points out, “the revelation has been brought about through disobedience”.⁴⁸⁵ As soon as she names the god, Psyche becomes more like him and mimics his behavior. Apuleius’ choice of language here signifies the mirroring with his use of repetition and polyptoton: the fact that Psyche falls into love with love means that her internal, emotional state matches the god’s, whom she recognizes through his external appearance.⁴⁸⁶ The phrase *cupidine fraglans Cupidinis* is of particular importance for two reasons. First, the word order stresses that these two different uses of the noun *cupido* are mediated through the participle *fraglans*, thereby providing a true textual mirror. Second, this verb that all commentators translate as “burning”, *fraglo*, was used earlier by Lucius in the thought-experiment of his encomium in *Met.* 2.8: the hypothetical bald-headed Venus is *cinnama fragrans* (see p. 216 n. 460 above for the full quotation). This

⁴⁸⁴ See Kenney 1990a, 171 *ad. loc.*

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶ Cf. Photis’ internal state of lust just after Lucius’ *Encomium of Hair* (2.10): *aemula libidine in amoris parilitatem congermanescenti mecum*. Photis, like the emulous mirror, becomes equal to Lucius in love.

word is, furthermore, the fulfillment of Venus' injunction to Cupid: she bid him to "let Psyche be possessed by the most burning passion for the worst man" (4.31: *virgo ista amore fragrantissimo teneatur hominis extremi*).

In a classic Apuleian fashion, Psyche's mirroring causes her to be possessed by the most intense love, but her possession or madness resembles that of the corrupted ἐραστής. This is the reason why she does not want Cupid to wake up and restrain her from the object of her desire. Rather, Psyche, like Lucius, has the incorrect reaction; she also hangs over the beloved (*prona in eum*) and showers him with greedy kisses (*inhians patulis ac petulantibus sauiis*). As we saw in chapter 2, *pronus* is a dangerous position to occupy when leaning over a mirror (or a beloved). Psyche's failure to be an enlightened ἐραστής is emphasized by the verbal echoes from the phrase *inhians patulis ac petulantibus sauiis*: in 2.10, Photis lunges at Lucius with open-mouthed kisses that smell of cinnamon (*patentis oris inhalatu cinnameo*) and in 2.16, the adjectival participle *petulans* is used of Lucius, who is drunk and overly amorous just before his tryst with Photis.

Apuleius, through both lexical and conceptual correspondences, reveals Psyche to be a paradigmatic model for Lucius' misinterpretation of Plato: rather than pursue her beloved in a manner that would lead to the Icarian flight of the soul, Psyche fetishizes parts of his body – first his hair and then his "weapons". Thus, Psyche's assimilation to Lucius highlights the parallel attempts and failures at Platonic ascent. In endeavoring to become an ideal Platonic ἐραστής, gazing upon the beauty of the beloved and witnessing the Forms, Psyche ultimately reverts to the model of the wrong type of lover, one who lunges at her beloved with excessive desire. She, like the ἐρώμενος, experiences a kind of

unwitting revelation; her reaction, however, is not that of the Platonic ideal, but rather, that of the soul whose black horse rules over its actions.⁴⁸⁷ That is, she models yet another life-choice for Lucius, which turns out to be a warning about how one should (or should not) interact with a beloved; through fetishism and excessive curiosity, her vision of Cupid represents another misconstrued Platonic ideal.

6. Isis' *Haarspiegel* and Serio-Erotic Epiphany:

Book 11 in many ways brings together all of the significant tropes that I have been tracing through this chapter. In Lucius' vision of Isis, the *Haarspiegel* recurs in a similar formula – namely, in an encomium of hair parallel to the eulogy of Photis' hair in book two. Lucius, as the beholder of Isis' *Haarspiegel*, thus becomes a kind of subordinate figure to the goddess – a fact reinforced by the language of slavery and religious submission that pervades the whole final book. We shall see as we trace through some of the significant hair and mirroring scenes of book 11 that Lucius approaches his encounter with Isis in a similar manner to his vision of Photis, attempting to play the ideal Platonic ἐραστής visualizing divine beauty; but, in this case, we stand on a bit shakier hermeneutic ground, and it will be necessary to come to grips once again with Winkler's "open-reading" of book 11.⁴⁸⁸ In what follows, we will see that, in this second encounter with a *Haarspiegel*, Lucius still does not look into the face of the goddess, but rather, gazes upon her hair, in which there is placed a mirror-like disc. In his description

⁴⁸⁷ Cf. Winkle 2011, who argues that Lucius is, in fact, the black horse of the *Phaedran* tri-partite soul with his famous white horse, *Candidus*, who leaves in book 3 and reappears in book 11, as the partner under the yoke.

⁴⁸⁸ Winkler's "open" interpretation, in fact, begins with the problem of book 11 and the hermeneutic conundrum it presents to both the reader of books 1-10 (Winkler 1985)

of her visage, he skips from her hair to her clothes, refusing to look into the goddess' eyes, the Platonic windows to the soul. Moreover, the language which characterizes Lucius' relationship with Isis remains erotically charged throughout book 11: Lucius uses many of the same words that he said of his tryst with Photis (e.g. *perfruor*, *voluptas*, etc.) to depict his encounter with the goddess – a fact that has struck some readers as representative of a synonymy rather than an antithesis between these two figures.⁴⁸⁹

On the other hand, unlike in the initial *Haarspiegel* scene, where the object of Lucius' gaze is turned around and Lucius' epiphany represents a fetishized version of the ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος model of the *Phaedrus*, in book 11, Lucius stands face-to-face with the goddess. He does not try to catch a glimpse from behind or obsess over other parts of the goddess' body; the object of desire is not turned around. One might see this as yet another instance where Lucius fetishistically gazes upon hair and other shiny and colorful objects in an act of “visual consumption” – to borrow a metaphor from Helen Morales.⁴⁹⁰ In other words, we could see this as the same old Lucius exhibiting the same consumptive voyeurism and labeling it epiphany. But Lucius *does* face the goddess, standing *vis-à-vis*, unlike in his tryst with Photis,⁴⁹¹ and Isis is clothed unlike the Knidian Aphrodite stance that Photis adopts or the “Bathing Diana” we encountered in chapter 2. One could argue further that it is actually inappropriate to look a goddess in the face,⁴⁹² though, as the Groningen Commentary on book 11 points out, “one traditional element of descriptions

⁴⁸⁹ See Harrison 2000; Murgatroyd 2004; van Mal-Maeder 1997; Libby 2011, 303-4.

⁴⁹⁰ See Morales 2004, 32-34 and 165-72 on the “consumptive gaze.”

⁴⁹¹ I must thank Adam Rabinowitz for pointing this aspect out to me when I delivered a version of this argument at a conference at UC Irvine, and Luca Graverini for seconding this sentiment when I discussed Lucius' epiphany in book 11 with him.

⁴⁹² See, e.g., Platt 2011 on epiphanic encounters in the Second Sophistic.

of gods is conspicuous by its absence [here], viz. the bright and shining eyes of the divinity”.⁴⁹³

For the proponent of the satirical reading, we can say that Lucius plays the subordinate role in this scene too – especially considering the erotic language; and in that respect, he is transformed into a kind of ἐρώμενος figure in yet another faux-Platonic encounter. Perhaps this subordination to a divinity would bother most readers. In that vein, many interpreters have also found Lucius shaving his head and joyfully displaying his shiny bald pate at the end of the novel to be a ridiculous portrayal of a religious initiate.⁴⁹⁴ Indeed, considering Lucius’ and Apuleius’ obsession with hair – even disheveled hair as a symbol of a philosophical life choice – the shaving of one’s head may amount to a loss of self. It must be said, however, that the erotic language of religious veneration and the apparent spectacle would not trouble the religious zealot of Apuleius’ day or ours⁴⁹⁵; in fact, one would imagine that it not would bother those inside of a cult system of initiation to appear absurd to viewers outside of it, though it may

⁴⁹³ See *GCA* 2015, 124, where they cite comparanda of Hom. *Il.* 2.297; *Hymn to Aphr.* 5.181; Heliod. 3.13.2-3.

⁴⁹⁴ Winkler 1985 compares this depiction to a scene of Aesop (*vita Aesopi* G87-88). O’Brien and James 2006 put a strangely positive spin on the baldness as a reclamation of *dignitas* lost in the Festival of Laughter. Others, and most convincingly, Dowden 2006 see behind Lucius’ baldness the famous figure of the Socratic intellectual in the Flavian period, outlined in Zanker 1995. Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012 has recently given a useful assessment of the semiotics of baldness by comparison to a number of Flavian period statues and busts that depict anonymous bald men. She also considers the depiction of Socrates at the end of the *Symposium* (in Alcibiades’ speech) as another important image for the bald initiate here.

⁴⁹⁵ For comparanda, one may point to the numerous erotically charged biblical metaphors for the relationship between the Judeo-Christian God and his people or his church (e.g. God refers to his people as a bride and himself as their husband (Isaiah 54:5-8; Isaiah 62:4-5; Hosea 2:14-20); God uses the language of sexual infidelity when his people worship other gods (Hosea 1:2); the entire book of Song of Solomon is an erotic metaphor for the relationship between God and his people (see, in particular, 1:2-4); Christ cryptically refers to himself as a bridegroom and his disciples as the guests of the bridegroom (Mark 2:19); throughout the New Testament, Christ is the bridegroom and the church is his bride (Ephesians 5:22-33; 2 Corinthians 11:2-4; Revelation 19:7; Revelation 21:2, 9-10). One could find even in the language of Catholic veneration of Mary certain pseudo-erotic terms appropriated to a different end.

offend some readers' sensibilities.⁴⁹⁶ Thus, even if the parody of Lucius is a wink between intellectuals and creates an in-group and an out-group, as one finds, e.g., in Old Comedy, it is one that only works for a group of people who are already on the periphery, as it were, or uninitiated in the group. To phrase it differently, while the portrayal of Lucius as a consumptive viewer still fetishizing the goddess' hair provides a comical and even satirical image, it would perhaps not matter to the religiously fervent – a fact which leads us back to the conundrum Winkler presented to us in *Auctor et Actor* and which I suggest the “choice narrative” model solves. In contrast to Winklerian ἀπορία, I will suggest at the end of the chapter that Lucius' baldness also has a different philosophical resonance, which may explicitly encourage the retrospective reading Winkler advocated.

Let us begin our analysis with Lucius' epiphanic vision of Isis near the beginning of book 11. At the opening of the book, the ass-Lucius wakes up on a beach, purifies himself, and offers a prayer of petition to the goddess who rules the world and whose name he does not know. After begging for mercy from the multiply named goddess — one of which is *caelestis Venus*⁴⁹⁷ — Lucius encounters Isis in an epiphany. At 11.3, he describes his vision:

Iam primum crines uberrimi prolixique et sensim intorti per diuina colla passiuè dispersi molliter defluebant. Corona multiformis uariis floribus sublimem destrinxerat uerticem, cuius media quidem super frontem plana rotunditas in modum speculi uel immo argumentum lunae candidum lumen emicabat, dextra laeuaque sulcis insurgentium uiperarum cohibita, spicis etiam Cerialibus desuper porrectis ornata. Tunica multicolor, bysso tenui pertexta, nunc albo candore lucida, nunc croceo flore lutea, nunc roseo rubore flammida; et quae longe longeque etiam meum confutabat optutum, palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore...

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. the famous passage from St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians: Ὁ λόγος γὰρ ὁ τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῖς μὲν ἀπολλυμένοις μωρία ἐστίν, τοῖς δὲ σωζομένοις ἡμῖν δύναμις θεοῦ ἐστίν (*I Corinth.* 1:18).

⁴⁹⁷ Cf. Kenney 1990b on this motif in *C&P*.

First of all her hair, extremely full, long, and gently curled, flowed down softly, freely strewn over her divine neck. A manifold crown, (woven) with variegated flowers, lightly rested on the top of her head. At its midpoint, above her forehead, a flat circular disc like a mirror – or rather a representation of the moon – was conspicuous with a white light. The disc was embraced on the left and right by coils of snakes rising up, with ears of wheat spreading out on top. Her robe, woven of thin flax linen, was multi-colored, now brilliant with white brightness, at another time yellow with golden flower, and now fiery with rosy redness; and the thing which far and away confounded my sight was a deep black cloak gleaming with dark brightness...

The formal correspondences between this passage and *Met.* 2.9 are so numerous that it will be useful to print the description of Photis' hair here (the conclusion of the encomium at *Met.* 2.9):

Sed in mea Photide non operosus sed inornatus ornatus addebat gratiam. Uberes enim crines leniter remissos et ceruice pendulos ac dein per colla dispositos sensimque sinuatos patagio residentes paulisper ad finem conglobatos in summum uerticem nodus adstrinxerat.

The parallel word choices and the playful appropriation of similar (but not exact) echoes demonstrate that these two passages are meant to be read in tandem. While Photis' hair represents the culmination of Lucius' desire in book 2, giving him wings (or so he thinks), Isis' hair in this passage of book 11 provides a heightened version of the same experience. Isis' hair is even fuller (*uberrimi*) than Photis' (*uberes*). Moreover, just as Photis' hair strangely models a two-fold style – hair half-up and half-down, dispersed over her neck (*per colla dispositos*) – Isis' hair is curled or twisted (*intorti*) over her divine neck (*per divina colla*) and flows down, dispersed everywhere (*passive dispersi*).⁴⁹⁸ However, while Lucius only describes Photis' hair, his *unica cura*, which has its closure at the top of her head in a knot (*nodus astrinxerat*), the narration of his

⁴⁹⁸ Libby 2011 reads the more pleasing sight of Isis' hair — i.e., *uberrimi* rather than *uberes* — as a further descent into delusion, and therefore, as satirical.

epiphanic encounter with Isis encompasses her entire marvelous aspect (*miranda species*). Lucius begins at the top of Isis' head, which is crowned (*corona... destrinxerat*).⁴⁹⁹ The entire visual experience is likewise parallel with the full encomium of hair in book 2. Rather than the hair that mimics (*aemulatur*) the flowery appearance (*flosculos*) of bird-plumage, Isis' hair is actually adorned with a crown covered with various flowers (*uariis floribus*). The emphasis on the *multicolor* nature of this sight is also resonant of the variegated *Haarspiegel* of 2.9, which *variat aspectum*. In particular, we should note the recurrence of the tri-colon of temporal phrases (*nunc...nunc...nunc*)⁵⁰⁰ to describe how the color changes over time: *nunc albo candore lucida, nunc croceo flore lutea, nunc roseo rubore flammida et...palla nigerrima splendescens atro nitore*.⁵⁰¹ Lastly, the recurrence of the mirror analogy – in this scene, with the phrase *in modum speculi*⁵⁰² – provides our final correspondence. Here, however, it is not the hair that provides the mirror, but the whole visual experience of looking at Isis' head, which culminates in a moon-disc (*rotunditas*) that resembles a mirror.⁵⁰³

The fact that these two passages ought to be read as parallel set-pieces should be clear at this point; that they both are intended to provide via *ekphrasis* a visual experience of some kind of epiphany – whether erotic or spiritual, parodic or serious – is also easy

⁴⁹⁹ Note the playful recurrence of the root word *-stringo*, used in the case of Photis to conclude the eulogy, but employed here to expound upon the epiphanic experience.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. *Met.* 2.9, where the *color* is described in the following terms: *nunc aurum coruscans in lenem mellis deprimitur umbram, nunc coruina nigredine caerulus columbarum colli flosculos aemulatur, uel cum guttis Arabicis obunctus et pectinis arguti dente tenui discriminatus et pone uersum coactus amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiorem?*

⁵⁰¹ Recall how the words *nitor* and etymological variants on *splendidus* were strewn throughout the *Haarspiegel* of 2.9.

⁵⁰² Cf. the phrase from 2.9, which is a variation on the analogy: *ad instar speculi*.

⁵⁰³ Gwyn Griffiths 1975, 124 *ad. loc.* traces the origin of the *rotunditas* in iconographic representations of Isis with a sun-disk as part of her head-dress. The lunar attribute applied to this depiction of the goddess was borrowed from the *interpretatio Graeca*, found in Plutarch's *DIO* 43. However, he makes no attempt to explain the strange analogy between this moon-disc-head-dress and the mirror.

enough to accept. The significance of this recurrence, however, offers readers of the *Metamorphoses* an entirely different problem. Other commentators have noticed the repetition of this strange formula *in modum speculi*, but most merely adduce this as evidence for the thematic parallel between Photis and Isis.⁵⁰⁴ For instance, according to Krabbe, the parallel hair-mirrors along with the two actual mirrors (4.31, 11.8-9) signify the underlying metonymy of Photis-Venus-Isis. Isis embodies a better version of Lucius' earlier domineering masters, Photis and Venus, and the *Haarspiegel* of 11.3 is a symbol that retroactively gives meaning to the earlier one of 2.9.⁵⁰⁵ Libby, on the other hand, argues for a continuity between the characters, interpreting Lucius' greater pleasure from the scene as an intensified version of his earlier delusion.⁵⁰⁶ While these readings are certainly a useful step forward, the fact that they reach antithetical conclusions demonstrates how we are still stuck in the divide between "serious" and "satiric" hermeneutics. If we take into account what I have argued up to this point in the chapter – namely, that the *Haarspiegel* of *Metamorphoses* 2.9 is primarily a refracted allusion to the mirroring scene between ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος in the *Phaedrus* – then the significance of the parodic representation of Lucius-as-ἐραστής in 2.9 can be imported into this scene as well. I shall suggest in the rest of this analysis that, just as in the mirroring scene between Lucius and Photis, where the allusion to the Platonic text ultimately serves to destabilize the proper roles of ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος by complicating the Platonic model, the mirror of Isis upon which Lucius gazes may have a

⁵⁰⁴ See GCA 2015, 132 *ad. loc.*, who merely note that mirrors occur in other ekphrastic scenes in Apuleius (e.g. 2.9, 4.31). But they do recognize the underlying Photis-Venus-Isis correspondence evoked by this encomium of hair (see p. 124).

⁵⁰⁵ See Krabbe 2003, 580-7.

⁵⁰⁶ Libby 2011.

more bewitching catoptric effect, transforming him from a servile ass into a slavish devotee. Moreover, the intermediary scene of epiphany, after which Psyche is enslaved to the vindictive *vulgaris Venus*, compelled to undergo an actual κατάβασις, and only ironically granted an undeserved apotheosis, further reinforces Lucius' absurd delusion by offering an exemplum to him (and to the reader) to which he can be compared. The question that Lucius' epiphanic encounter with Isis should thus inspire in the reader, particularly because of its recurring *Haarspiegel*, is whether the Platonic dichotomy of *vulgaris Venus* and *caelestis Venus* holds true here. Again, just as in the initial *Haarspiegel*, where Lucius' poor exegesis of Plato opens up alternative models of interpretation, here too, there is another goddess of myth that may loom over this text — one who cannot be seen except indirectly through mirror-gazing.

In the passage currently under discussion, the labyrinthine and entrapping power of Isis is explicitly developed in the conflation of Egyptian iconography with the mirror trope; Isis has snakes – what Gwyn Griffiths identifies as the *uraei* of traditional Egyptian royal head-dress⁵⁰⁷ – attached to her head: *rotunditas...dextra laeuaque sulcis insurgentium uiperarum cohibita*. I contend, however, that the reference to the mirror in such close proximity to snakes in the hair of a goddess must at least conjure up the image of Medusa. If this is a fair characterization of the suggestive image, then we can begin to ask what the real effect is of Lucius' epiphany. Is it a kind of death of self through subordination to a master figure or is it a true conversion experience? If Lucius becomes a corrupted ἐραστής transformed into a quadruped from his first encounter with the

⁵⁰⁷ See Gwyn Griffiths 1975, 125 *ad. loc.*: “The serpents mentioned by Apuleius are the uraei which often appear in a double form on the head-dress of queens and sometimes in the form of a chaplet of uraei;

Haarspiegel, this vision of the goddess could represent merely another iteration of an enslaving mirroring or a redeemed version of his original fetishism. I suggest that Apuleius is bringing this choice to the forefront of the reader's mind by opening the conversion book of the *Metamorphoses* with a vision of Isis that is especially reminiscent of Photis' *Haarspiegel*. We saw in chapter 2 of this dissertation how Lucius was fixed as a statue before the goddess during his initiation, dressed up as a variegated spectacle for all to behold. In my analysis, I proposed that Lucius recalls the Actaeon of *Met.* 2.4, in so far as he is a *simulacrum* of a man in a statuary ensemble in the process of transforming and "imaging" a goddess. Let us look at the scene that immediately follows – what scholars have considered the "first ending" of the novel⁵⁰⁸ – in order to see Lucius' continued erotic subordination to the goddess. After the third day of festivities for Lucius' initiation, Lucius remains perched before the *simulacrum* of the goddess for a few days. He describes the delight with which he cherishes the goddess as follows:

Paucis dehinc ibidem commoratus diebus inexplicabili uoluptate simulacri diuini perfruebar, inremunerabili quippe beneficio pigneratus.

Afterwards, having remained on that very spot for a few days, I took pleasure in the ineffable delight of the holy image, pledged to her, of course, because of her boundless favor.

This passage provides us with ample evidence as to the correspondence between Photis and Isis, as it is a near quotation of a line we have already heard Lucius say to Photis. I print here the passage from *Met.* 3.22, where Lucius begs Photis to acquire the magical ointment so that he can become winged:

magno et singulari me adfectionis tuae fructu **perfrui** et impertire nobis unctulum indidem per istas tuas pupillas, mea mellitula, tuumque mancipium

⁵⁰⁸ See Finkelpearl 2004 for a discussion of the anti-closural elements in the *Metamorphoses*.

inremunerabili beneficio sic tibi perpetuo pignera ac iam perfice ut meae
Veneri Cupido **pinnatus** adsistam tibi.

In an attempt to receive the benefits of the *Phaedran* erotic catoptrics – namely, Icarian flight – Lucius bids Photis to enslave him (*mancipium*) to herself, using the formula *inremunerabili beneficio sic tibi perpetuo pignera*. In 11.24, as he stands before Isis, a *simulacrum* gazing upon a *simulacrum* of the goddess, he deploys the very same formula using a perfect passive participle to accentuate the completed aspect of the transformation (*pigneratus*).

Lucius is already bound to Isis for her *inremunerabilis beneficium*, and once again, he has not gained wings, but has rather become immobilized in a kind of inhuman form. The verb *perfrui* connects this passage further with the *Encomium of Hair*, as it is the word Lucius uses to describe (rather disconcertingly) his general practice when he encounters a beautiful head of hair: *et publice intueri et domi postea perfrui* (2.8). In this context and in the previously cited passage from 3.22, the word clearly has sexual undertones.⁵⁰⁹ When we encounter this strange use of the verb – to enjoy the *inexplicabilis voluptas* of the goddess' visage – it is difficult not to imagine that Lucius' encounter with Isis is a sexually charged experience akin to his earlier rendezvous with Photis. We may recall from the discussion of Seneca's *de Clementia* in chapter 1 the

⁵⁰⁹ It should be noted that it occurs 9 times in the *Metamorphoses*, and 6 of them (not counting 11.24) explicitly or implicitly denote sexual intercourse. See 2.8; 3.22; 3.23; 6.23; 9.16; 9.28. A particularly interesting usage occurs in the inset adultery tale of the miller's wife in 9.28. When the miller discovers the beautiful young boy, who has been secretly sleeping with his wife, the miller "laying alone with the boy, enjoys the most gratifying revenge for his ruined marriage" (*solus ipse cum puero cubans gratissima corruptarum nuptiarum vindicata perfruebatur*). This outrageous periphrasis for the rape of the young adulterer by the old man highlights a usage of this verb that could easily be classed in the realm of an ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος encounter.

strangeness of *voluptas* as an end point of mirroring.⁵¹⁰ But here, again, the question remains whether it is a Platonic pleasure – the kind of metaphysical erection the soul experiences at visualizing beauty – or whether this pleasurable looking is another moment of delusion. In this instance, moreover, Lucius does not seem to fetishize any particular part of the goddess or try to catch a glimpse of her from behind, but rather, he worships her “like an ἄγαλμα”. We witness Lucius once again fancying himself to be a Platonic ἐραστής figure, even employing the same vocabulary. Now that we have seen how closely aligned Lucius’ experiences of Photis and Isis are, however, there is one final scene for us to consider: Lucius’ final state of baldness – his decision to sport a shiny dome unabashedly – in the concluding line of the novel. We began this chapter with Apuleius’ own disheveled hair as a symbol of his philosophical life choice; and there, we saw him attempt to compensate for his external appearance – which, much like Socrates, was not very pretty – by revealing his inner statue of a god (*sigillum dei*) a statue that would remind a “diligent reader” of the erotic epiphany in the *Phaedrus*. At the end of the *Metamorphoses*, too, Lucius has been stripped of his ugly external *corium*, which scholars have demonstrated appears quite similar to ancient depictions of Socrates.⁵¹¹ And as I demonstrated in the last chapter, an alternative to the cynical Actaeonic interpretation of Lucius’ statuization is that his external ass-figure has been replaced by a *simulacrum dei*. The question left for the *scrupulosus lector* is not only how closely Lucius’ encounters with the mirror have brought him to traipsing upon the

⁵¹⁰ See again Bartsch’s discussion of *voluptas* (Bartsch 2006, 184-5).

⁵¹¹ See Graverini 2012 and Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012 for the two most illuminating readings.

ὑπερourάνιος τόπος, but also whether or not the reader wants to follow him down that path.

7. Lucius' Final Baldness: Closure?

The final line of the *Metamorphoses* has inspired a plethora of satirical readings of the novel ever since Winkler elaborated on the potential significance and the hermeneutic multivalence of the concluding image of a baldheaded Lucius. In what Winkler calls an “epi-epilogue”, Lucius narrates his final activities as a thrice-initiated devotee of Isis and Osiris:

Rursus denique quaqua raso capillo collegii uetustissimi et sub illis Syllae temporibus conditi munia, non obumbrato uel oblecto caluitio, sed quoquoersus obuio, gaudens obibam.

Finally, with my head once again shaven completely and with my baldness neither covered up nor hidden, but exposed wherever I went, I joyfully carried out the duties of that ancient priesthood, which was established in the time of Sulla.

Winkler, after illuminating what he thinks are all of the possible interpretations of such a sign,⁵¹² concludes: “a shaven head by itself, without further comment, instantly brings two things to mind for a Greek or Roman of the second century C.E.: an Isiac priest or a popular buffoon.”⁵¹³ This binary approach proved useful for Winkler’s interpretation of the *Met.* as a kind of detective story that has no authorized interpretation but reveals whatever the reader would like to see. Those who prefer to see the *Metamorphoses* as

⁵¹² For Winkler (see Winkler 1985, 225-7), the four possible interpretations are: (1) Isiac devotees shaved their heads to signify conversion (see Juv. 6.533; Plut. *DIO* 352C), (2) people who escaped from a shipwreck or slavery thanked a god by deracination (see Lucian *Sal. Post.* 1-2; *Hermotimos* 86), (3) Baldness is just plain funny (see Eumolpos in Petronius’ *Sat.* 109.8-10), and (4) mime-comedians (*calvus mimicus*, *μῆμος φαλακρός*) shaved their heads presumably because of (3) (see Lucian *Symp.* 18; Alciphron 3.7).

⁵¹³ Winkler 1985, 226.

strictly satire have latched onto the binary but emphasized, as Winkler himself did, the comic and ridiculous look of the unashamed, bald narrator.⁵¹⁴ Recently, however, a few commentators have looked more closely at the particular kind of baldness and questioned the underlying connection between Lucius and the *calvus mimicus* by clarifying the distinctions between natural baldness and a shaven head and by comparing the Isaic baldness with archeological evidence of ritual baldness.⁵¹⁵ A particular strand of interpretation we should note is the connection between baldness and wisdom, especially in depictions of Socrates amongst second century intellectuals. Graverini notes that Odysseus is bald at certain important moments in the *Odyssey*,⁵¹⁶ and Socrates was “the paradigm of baldness itself”⁵¹⁷ according to Varro, who used the intellectual almost proverbially: *tam glaber quam Socrates* (*Men.* 490). Similarly, Dowden, O’Brien, and James have preferred to see Lucius’ bald pate at the end of the *Metamorphoses* as a kind of Middle Platonist allusion to Socrates, the quintessential bald intellectual.⁵¹⁸

In this conclusion, I would like to offer two new interpretations of the final line, suggesting another possible erotic valence that has yet to be noticed in the scholarship and expanding on the Socratic picture. Both of these ultimately relate to the ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος interaction that I have suggested lies at the core of many of the erotic hair-mirroring scenes throughout the novel. Let us begin with the phallic associations of

⁵¹⁴ See Harrison 2000, 238-52; Van Mal-Maeder 1997, 106-8.

⁵¹⁵ See Graverini 2012, 82-89, whose fuller treatment of the symbolic valences of baldness in the literary evidence concludes that Winkler’s binary classification between religious and comic is “somewhat artificial” (see 86). Cf. Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012 for a very useful review of the semantic spectrum of baldness in both literary and iconographic evidence.

⁵¹⁶ Graverini 2012, 86 cites an interesting, later interpretation of Odysseus’ baldness, offered by Synesius in his *Encomium of Baldness*. There, he explains how Odysseus succeeded because his entirely bald head (ἅπαντα φαλακρός) was so bright that it lit up the whole room.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ See Dowden 2006, 56; James and O’Brien 2006, 248.

baldness. In his recent discussion of Encolpius in the *Satyricon*, Jensson explicates a “recognition” scene, in which the captain identifies the baldheaded and disguised Encolpius not by his face, but by his genitals (*Sat.* 105.9).⁵¹⁹ Jensson suggests from this strange scene that Encolpius’ genitals are treated as a metonymy for the man and that baldness was one of the primary features that signified one’s phallic nature.⁵²⁰ Baldness, among other signs, is one of the archetypal features of the phallic clown in Greek culture and for that reason, is closely associated with sexual activity. Aristotle attributes the loss of hair and eyebrows to engagement in sexual activity⁵²¹ and Alcibiades, when describing Socrates’ similarity to a baldheaded Silenus in the *Symposium* – a depiction that became a cliché in Apuleius’ time⁵²² – is drawing upon the same image of the phallic clown.⁵²³ Jensson thus concludes: “when the shaven and eyebrowless protagonist Encolpius is recognized by his prick by Lichas, he resembles a *cinaedus*”.⁵²⁴ If we understand the baldheaded Lucius declaiming around Rome in light of the ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος dichotomy that pervades the *Metamorphoses*, perhaps Lucius’ baldness is meant to represent his continued sexual activity. Of course, I am not suggesting literal sexual activity. Rather, one way to read his baldness is to say that Lucius becomes a metonymy for his phallus in the end, as reflected by his bald pate, and that in relation to the goddess he plays the role of subordinate partner. His baldness displays that he has been transformed from a deluded

⁵¹⁹ See Petr. *Sat.* 105.9: *nec manus nec faciem meam consideravit, sed continuo ad inguina mea luminibus deflexis movit officiosam manum et 'salve' inquit 'Encolpi'.* Cf. also Eumolpus comment about Ascylos in 92.9: *habebat enim inguinum pondus tam grande, ut ipsum hominem laciniam fascini crederes.*

⁵²⁰ See Jensson 2004, 239-42.

⁵²¹ See *Historia Animalium* 518a-b.

⁵²² See Zanker 1995. Cf. Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012 for the image of baldness as an allusion to the Silenus-Socrates of the *Symposium*.

⁵²³ See Jensson 2004, 240.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.* 241.

ἑραστής figure in his tryst with Photis into a *cinaedus*-figure, the Roman appropriation of the Greek ἐρώμενος.⁵²⁵ But even in this reading, the embedded choice is present for the diligent or *scrupulosus* reader, since we, in turn, become fetishists like Lucius, if we merely reduce him to one of his parts and only take pleasure in this parody.

The second valence of Lucius' baldness expands on the claim that Lucius represents a Socrates figure, ugly on the outside with beautiful statues underneath. But rather than a philosophically enlightened Socrates of the Platonic sort, I suggest that Lucius' final baldness can be read as another allusion to Socrates at a particular moment in the *Phaedrus*. All treatments of this final sentence of the *Metamorphoses* focus solely on the fact that Lucius is bald. No one attempts to account for the oddity of the surrounding phrase: *non obumbrato uel obtectio caluitio*. Why does Lucius highlight that his baldness is uncovered and why does he use this pleonasm to describe his lack of shame in traveling around Rome? I propose that this phrase is a gloss on a moment in the *Phaedrus* where Socrates changes his attire in order to deliver his Palinode to ἔρω. That is, before producing the sublime myth of the *Phaedrus* and announcing a redeemed approach to ἔρω, Socrates says (*Phaedr.* 243b):

πρὶν γάρ τι παθεῖν διὰ τὴν τοῦ Ἑρωτος κακηγορίαν πειράσομαι αὐτῷ ἀποδοῦναι τὴν παλινωδίαν, γυμνῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ τότε ὑπ' αἰσχύνης ἐγκεκαλυμμένος.

Before I experience some punishment for slander against Love, I will attempt to atone through a Palinode, with my head uncovered and not, as before, concealed out of shame.

Socrates, too, uses pleonasm – the “naked” (γυμνῇ; cf. *non...obtectio*) and “unconcealed” (οὐχ...ἐγκεκαλυμμένος; cf. *non obumbrato*) head – to explain how his change of attire will

⁵²⁵ See Williams 1999.

transform the content of the speech that follows this moment in the dialogue. The myth of the enlightened soul that is given wings through an erotic encounter is told without the shame of covering the head. The lack of shame is thus the impetus for both Socrates' and Lucius' choice to represent their conversion/transformation through a bald and uncovered head.

That Apuleius had this transitional moment of the *Phaedrus* in mind when he portrayed Lucius' shameless baldness at the conclusion of the novel may be a simple enough proposition to accept. What it means for our overall interpretation of the novel, however, is an entirely different question. If we accept the intertextual relationship between these two passages, the problem immediately arises that the *Metamorphoses* ends after this sentence, whereas Socrates uncovers his head in the *Phaedrus* in order to deliver the famous Palinode. That is, the *Met.* has no Palinode, though it gestures to one even as early as book 1.⁵²⁶ The only way to see a Palinode in the text would be to adopt Winkler's suggestion that the *Metamorphoses* invites a retrospective reading. Indeed, what this new intertext suggests is that we no longer need to borrow the "second reading" motif from the genre of detective novels, but rather, we can find a Platonic precedent for a retrospective reading which adopts the terms of the first reading – much like Socrates' first speech – but reverses the fundamental point. That is, if the *Metamorphoses* does, in fact, invite re-reading, then the Palinode that Apuleius offers comes through the newly revealed significance of all of the earlier points in the novel that one encounters upon a retrospective reading. However, *contra* Winkler, this does not allow for "open" interpretation of the sort popular in the 1980's model of hermeneutic ambiguity; that is

⁵²⁶ See, e.g., the interpretation of Socrates' attempt to cross the river (*Met.* 1.19) in Winkle 2011.

because the whole process of re-reading becomes analogous to a Palinode. It is thus made serious by its very correspondence to the myth in the *Phaedrus*.

The final word of the novel, *obibam*, which scholars have interpreted as an ominous ending – arguing that the verb, which can also mean “to die”, points to Lucius’ metaphorical death through conversion⁵²⁷ – could instead signal a new beginning, an answer to the paradoxical questions Socrates asks at the very opening of the *Phaedrus*: ποῖ δὴ καὶ πόθεν. That is, just as the *Phaedrus* opens with a journey outside the city walls – with Phaedrus “[traveling] on a walk outside of the city walls” (πορεύομαι δὲ πρὸς περίπατον ἔξω τείχους) – Lucius’ joyful movement (*gaudens obibam*) sends us back to the beginning of this journey, where he starts his own *Phaedran* περίπατος on a journey towards a Platonic love.⁵²⁸ The serious reader, in turn, can come to this second reading as if coming to the Palinode, where the terms of ἔρως are entirely reconfigured. In the next chapter, we will see how this call to retrospective reading offers its embedded choice to the second reader in anticipating the image of a Marsyan Socrates in the opening line of the Prologue.

⁵²⁷ See Finkelpearl 2004, 329-30.

⁵²⁸ On the opening narrative chapters of the *Met.* as an allusion to the opening lines of the *Phaedrus*, see Graverini 2012. Winkle 2011 approximates something close to this line of reasoning as well.

CHAPTER 4: Embedded Choice in the Prologue of the Metamorphoses

So far in this dissertation, we have seen Apuleius time and again work in a tradition of blending mirror tropes (particularly Platonic mirror tropes) to a seemingly parodic end. It has been one of my primary contentions throughout that Apuleius, in alluding to the *κάτοπτρον/speculum* tradition, complicates originally Platonic scenes with later mirroring scenes primarily from the Roman poetic tradition, all of which exist in a tradition of interpretation and which are already themselves in a complex intertextual relationship with Plato. Whether Apuleius is parodying Platonic ideals by mixing high-minded philosophy into a “low” bawdy novel, or whether he is challenging them by alluding to other authorizing models as alternatives to Plato, his relationship to the founder of his professed philosophical school is by no means easy to decipher. The text that has inspired the most heated debate over Apuleius’ philosophical commitments is, surprisingly, not one of the Middle Platonic handbooks that Apuleius produced - such as *de Platone et eius Dogmate* or *de deo Socratis* - but the multi-generic and hermeutically playful *Metamorphoses*. As we saw in the introduction, recent scholarship on this text has largely settled on the notion that Apuleius’ application of allusion and intertext is aimed at unphilosophical ends – e.g., mere *divertissement* and sophistic display⁵²⁹; to my mind, this reduces the complexity of Apuleius’ dense tapestry of intertexts to a rather simple procedure, and betrays, on the part of Apuleius scholars, a failure to grasp the complexities of Plato. In this final chapter, I will argue that Apuleius, by mixing Platonic scenes with alternative models of knowledge and by generically complicating the original

⁵²⁹ For representative proponents of this view, see, e.g., Harrison 2000a; Harrison 2013; van Mal-Maeder 1997; Sandy 1997; and May 2006.

scenes, is doing precisely what Plato did by simultaneously parodying Homer and himself in an agonistic (and satirical) game of pursuing knowledge.

In light of the Platonic call to an act of retrospective reading, I would like to return to the *Metamorphoses* with the tradition of the didactic text-*speculum* (see ch. 1) in mind and consider the extent to which the Prologue of the *Met.* alludes to the varied manifestations of the didactic *speculum*. In particular, in what follows, I will turn to what I suggest is a previously unrecognized intertext for the Prologue of the *Metamorphoses*: namely, the eulogy of Socrates at the end of Plato's *Symposium*, in which Socrates is presented simultaneously as a mirror of self-knowledge to his listeners and as an archaic spectacle, or a θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι. That is, in Alcibiades' speech, Socrates, who is said to charm his listeners with λόγοι, undergoes a metamorphosis from Satyric "images" (εἰκόνες) to "statues of gods" (ἀγάλματα θεῶν). Just as with the promise that the narrating *ego* gives to his readers in the Prologue – the visual-aural experience of marvel at a transformation from *figurae* into *imagines* – Alcibiades' depiction of Socrates as an Odysseus *redivivus* and as an archaic "marvel to behold" also engages with categories of charm and marvel, the reversal of external and internal selves, and the confusion between viewing and hearing. Moreover, the dressing up of words in the language of an ass, which has been interpreted up to this point as a parodic foreshadowing of Lucius' metamorphosis, may instead invite readers to a more serious mode of listening to Σωκρατικοὶ λόγοι, which are also always hidden behind an ass-hide.

But, before we delve into the Prologue and look closely at the complex allusive language, I want to meditate on the reception of this vexed text and on the question of what it would even mean for this text to be didactic. Ever since Jack Winkler's famous

aporetic reading of the *Metamorphoses*, scholars have struggled to make meaning of this novel without reverting back to the reductionist categories of “serious” and “satirical”, which *Auctor et Actor* left us straddling in a circus maneuver. And one of the textual sites of the most intense debate is the hermeneutically ambiguous Prologue, which Winkler labeled as a “conundrum” for its readers. From those who attempt to trace the Prologue’s relationship to the Greek predecessor, the *Metamorphoseis* of Lucius of Patrae,⁵³⁰ to those who see in it a variety of intertexts,⁵³¹ genres,⁵³² and textual games,⁵³³ the introductory words of the *Met.* have opened many troublesome cans of worms. By looking at the Prologue within the “mirror of the text” and the “mirror of Socrates” traditions, I would like to attempt to change the terminology we apply to it: rather than seeing it as a ‘conundrum’ – a term borrowed from literary critical categories and genres unknown to the ancient world (e.g., the detective novel) – I will argue again that it represents an “embedded choice” for the retrospective reader, that is, a choice between Homeric and Platonic modes of viewing, listening, and reading. The value of this approach lies not merely in the fact that it enables us to see hidden behind the words of the Prologue the two archetypal figures of fiction and subsequent models for the character of Lucius⁵³⁴ – namely, Odysseus and Socrates – but also in the fact that this “choice” model for reading texts possessed a significant interpretive purchase already in antiquity.

⁵³⁰ See Tilg 2007.

⁵³¹ For a sampling of views, see Trapp 2001, Gibson 2001, Gowers 2001, and Smith 2001, all in the edited volume on the Prologue (Kahane and Laird 2001).

⁵³² See, e.g., Graverini 2012 for the view that the Prologue is a negotiation of the genre of the novel.

⁵³³ See Winkler 1985 for the view that the Prologue represents a series of textual games.

⁵³⁴ See Hunter 2006; Graverini 2012; Montiglio 2007.

As I explored in the introduction, the choice between the pleasurable and the philosophical is a *topos* in ancient literature that can be traced all the way back to Homer and Hesiod. Moreover, Hesiod's "two roads" passage together with Prodicus' "choice of Heracles" became material ripe for reworking in the Second Sophistic. In particular, we may call to mind again the choice outlined in Plutarch's *Quomodo Quis Sentiat*, namely that one could approach literature, too, with a "serious" attitude towards reading, or merely in search of pleasure. Just as the Simonidean bee flits from flower to flower in search of pollen, so also some men find sentiments "worthy of seriousness" (79c8ff.: τι σπουδῆς ἄξιον) amidst literature that others read only "for the sake of pleasure or diversion" (ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα καὶ παιδιᾶς). We may compare this passage to a different perspective from the Second Sophistic, that of Maximus of Tyre. In his *Dissertations* (18.5-6), he discusses the enigmatic or dual nature of Socrates, whose erotic discussions could be either "allegorical" (αἰνίγματα) or "ironic" (εἰρωνεύματα). As he continues, he analyzes Socrates' λόγοι, particularly his erotic speeches, as more "slippery" (σφαλεροῦς) and "dangerous" (κινδυνώδεις) than any allegories that Homer produced, whom Socrates unjustly criticized, since Socrates, too, admitted of "pleasure for the ears" (τῇ ἀκοῇ τὸ τερπνόν). In fact, Socrates' charming and pleasurable stories seem almost "inconsistent with the life of philosophy" (πῶς γὰρ ὅμοια ταῦτα φιλοσόφῳ βίῳ;); that is, Socrates steers the difficult course of "using shameful words as allegories for beautiful deeds" (αἰνίττεται δι' αἰσχροῶν ῥημάτων πράξεις καλὰς), of "hiding good under evil and revealing what is beneficial through what is harmful" (τὸ γὰρ ὑποβαλεῖν αἰσχροῦ καλὸν καὶ τὰ ὠφελοῦντα διὰ τῶν βλαπτόντων).

Bringing these two separate views of ‘philosophers’ from the Second Sophistic together, we have a model of reading and a mode of speaking, both of which envision allegorical truths hidden behind pleasurable words. And, what is essential to my point, in the case of Maximus of Tyre, Socrates is the forefather of philosophical inconsistency; he represents a dual spectacle of pleasure and truth, particularly in matters of ἔργος. In Maximus’ framework, moreover, Socrates is pit against Homer as an alternative model of allegorizing, and at the same time, he is excused for his own mode of allegorizing on the grounds that he inherited it from the archaic poetic tradition (starting with Homer).⁵³⁵

Thus, in the Second Sophistic, we encounter writers whose complex understanding of the nature of the age-old literary critical dichotomy between the “utility” (*utilitas*) and the “charm” (*dulcedo*) of a piece of writing not only anticipates antithetical reader-responses from different readers, but actually traces the ambiguity of philosophical allegory to the hero of Platonic dialogue. Indeed, though the question of whether writing is beneficial or merely pleasurable can be traced back to historiographical and rhetorical polemics that predate even Plato – with, e.g., Thucydides criticizing other historians’ more fabulous historiographical methodologies when he claims to have written something “useful” (1.22: ὠφέλιμα) albeit “less pleasurable for the ears” (ἐς μὲν ἀκρόασιν...ἀτερπέστερον) – Plato provides perhaps the *locus classicus* on the question of *utile* versus *dulce* at the end of the *Phaedrus* (275ff.). In a dialogue that concerns itself primarily with the power of ψυχαγωγία, or *psychagogic rhetoric*, Socrates narrates the myth of Theuth and Thamos, in which the divine king attempts to decipher the “benefit” (ὠφέλεια) and “harm”

⁵³⁵ We may recall how Socrates passes off the content of his first speech in the *Phaedrus* onto one of the archaic poets. See Intro, 26 n. 69 on *Phaedr.* 235c3.

(βλάβη) of writing for its users. This story then provides an entree into a comparison of written and spoken λόγοι, and there, Socrates concludes that the former only offer pleasure (έορτή) and a source of play (παιδιή) for the reader. No sensible man would “in seriousness” (σπουδή) write speeches down, according to Socrates, because λόγοι, similarly to painting, cannot respond to interlocutors. The written dialogue, in turn, represents an εἶδωλον of the real thing.

Just as at the end of the *Phaedrus*, where Plato denigrates writing – paradoxically, considering his voluminous output – the *Republic*, too, concludes with a question of whether Homeric poetry is “useful” (ώφέλεια) or “harmful” (βλάβη) because of its pleasure. As I argued in chapter 2, the former passage from the *Phaedrus* alludes indirectly to the “mirror of poetry”, by using mirroring terminology (e.g., εἶδωλον, ἐν ὕδατι) and a comparison to the other mode of *mimesis* from the *Republic*, namely painting (ζωγραφία). Likewise, book 10 of the *Republic* explicitly engages with the “mirror of Homer” tradition as an image to challenge the allegorical value of Homeric poetry. Therefore, one of the oldest literary critical questions of antiquity - one which has perpetually bothered readers of the *Metamorphoses* and which Luca Graverini has recently shown is foregrounded in the aesthetic program of the Prologue⁵³⁶ - is in Plato already bound up with the metaphor of the mirror and the question of reading, viewing, and listening.

In Platonic epistemology, we may note, this *utilitas/dulcedo* dichotomy seems to relate to a series of other dichotomies that recur throughout the Platonic corpus: namely (1) whether a mode of viewing is superficial or deep, (2) whether what is being seen is

⁵³⁶ See Graverini 2012, 21-25.

physical or metaphysical, and (3) whether the viewer is inside or outside of the object upon which he or she gazes. In chapter 1, I explored how the philosophical mirror tradition in antiquity – both the Platonic self-knowledge tradition and the more ‘superficial’ tradition of exemplary mirroring – was fundamentally intertwined with questions of “external” versus “internal” selves and was torn between the Platonic metaphysical soul as self and the self as a social construct. In the former tradition, the *speculum* provided an important metaphor for seeing the unseeable, and as such, for delving within or reaching behind the external reality; in the latter tradition, the “adornment of the self” worked by analogy to the mirror’s function for external adornment, appropriating a fundamentally cosmetic model for virtue. But important for our understanding is the fact that both traditions, through an act of reinterpretation, ultimately legitimize a visual activity, the primary association of which is the production of pleasure. Looking in a mirror, it could be argued, is either an inherently vain activity – i.e., only beneficial to maintaining external appearances – or an erotically charged one – i.e., only facilitating seduction and pleasure – or both, as in the story of Narcissus. In either case, it is an act of fantasy, and it only acquires a “serious” meaning after an “authorized” character – say, a philosopher or a religious figure – reinterprets the originally frivolous act. The philosopher enters the scene, and through an unforeseen hermeneutic claim, explains that there is something behind the external and superficial viewing – either a deeper self-knowledge to be grasped or a more virtuous self which leads to a better society. That is, the “authorized” interpreter tells the viewer that he or she is not a “Narcissus” or a “Hostius Quadra”, but is instead a “Socrates” or a “Demosthenes” – models that Apuleius claimed for himself in the *Apologia*.

For my purposes, it is important to note that one could make these same accusations against reading literature or listening to poetry – namely, that the activity is vain and erotically charged – and indeed, Plato did,⁵³⁷ which is precisely why we see these Second Sophistic ‘Platonists’ attempting to tip-toe around him with overwrought explanations of allegory. As I discussed briefly in chapter 1, reading a book and looking in a mirror do have a certain subset of properties in common: *prima facie*, both involve looking into a flat surface; but more importantly, both enable the viewer to see things to which he or she has not been granted access; and both were viewed, at least at many points in antiquity, as feminizing and erotic activities.⁵³⁸ Indeed, the act of reading ‘fiction’ in particular – which long held the reputation of being mere trifles for women⁵³⁹ – is most similar to the frivolous mirror-gazing for the sake of fantasy. This is the reason why ancient readers of the *Metamorphoses* felt compelled to use Apuleius’ own programmatic statements against him⁵⁴⁰: in the act of reading, I am incorporated into the

⁵³⁷ See, e.g., the incredible passage from *Republic* 10, in which Socrates likens the exile of Homer to a break-up with a beloved who was bad for the lover. Just as men who have “fallen in love” (οἱ ποτέ τοῦ ἐρασθέντες) with a lover who is not “beneficial” (ὠφέλιμον) – note the recourse to the *utilitas/dulcitas* debate – they have to “chant a charm” (ἐπαδόντες) over themselves while listening to Homer. And importantly, this word *ἐπαδεῖν* is one of the possible Greek translations of Apuleius’ *permulcere* (cf. Schlam 1970).

⁵³⁸ Cf. the multiple references to books in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*, and the degradation of manliness that the growing book-culture of Athens brings about. Of particular interest is the opening exchange between Dionysus and Heracles, in which Dionysus claims to be inspired with “longing” (πόθος) and “desire” (ἵμερος) from reading one of Euripides’ plays, and Heracles responds with a sexual joke. In Rome, we may see the reaction of Cato the Elder to Greek literature (e.g., at Cato *ad fil. frg.* 1 (cited in Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 29.14)) as a similar conservative response to the feminizing effect of literature.

⁵³⁹ See, e.g., the anecdote from the *Historia Augusta* about Septimius Severus writing a letter to the Senate, in which he labeled Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* “old women’s nursery songs” (*Alb.* 12.12: *neniae aniles*)

⁵⁴⁰ Macrobius categorized the *Metamorphoses*, along with Petronius’ *Satyricon* and Menander’s comedies, as *fabulae* that were written ‘only to offer pleasure to the ears’ (*Somn.* 1.2.8: *tantum conciliandae auribus voluptatis...gratia*) and as tales that merely ‘charm the ears’ (*auditum mulcent*). And on the anecdote from the *Historia Augusta*, see n. 540 above. Graverini 2012, 23–4 astutely points out that these later critics borrow their terminology from the programmatic claims of the *Metamorphoses* itself.

fantasy experience – or ‘immersed,’ to use a recently developed theoretical term⁵⁴¹ – much as in gazing at myself and narcissistically fantasizing about a future or alternative “self”. In both reading a novel and gazing into a mirror, I become a voyeur of sights that I am normally barred from seeing⁵⁴²; in the former case, by peeking in through the novelistic window on others’ lives, and in the latter case, by objectifying myself into an “other” upon which I can gaze in wonder.⁵⁴³ But miraculously, at the end of the *Metamorphoses*, an “authorized” interpreter enters the text and reinterprets Lucius’ (and the reader’s) experience. Just as Apuleius the *philosophus Platonicus* manages to give an apology for his narcissistic mirror-gazing by appealing to “authorized”, philosophical models of mirror gazing, we readers, on the brink of watching (and enjoying) a public display of bestiality at the end of book 10, are, together with Lucius, absolved of our guilt when we read Mithras’ reinterpretation of the preceding events. The visual experience of entering this fantasy world and becoming immersed in its exigencies and its seedy underbelly is suddenly redeemed as a meaningful activity. I want to indulge in the pleasures of Lucius’ vision – I want the gossip and the dirty details of book 9’s adultery tales – but I also want another character – an “authorized” character, such as a priest – to enter the story and make my own voyeurism somehow acceptable or part of a larger plan.

⁵⁴¹ For the theoretical model of ‘immersion’ in reading literature, see Ryan 2001. But, perhaps the term ‘incorporation’, which has also found its footing in art critical discussions could also be useful, especially considering its relationship to ‘modes of viewing’ in art. For excellent discussions of how certain sculpture groups and Hellenistic poems ‘incorporate’ the reader into the viewing/reading experience, see Zanker 2004.

⁵⁴² See, e.g., Hunter 2009, 51 in speaking of “curiosity”: “There is always something slightly ‘voyeuristic’ about novel-reading, always the sense that we should not really be taking an interest in other people’s affairs”; and again, at 54: “...if readers have to be *scrupulosi*, then novelists must, of course, be *curiosi*, or in the language of the *Satyrice* they, no less than their readers, must put the *oculus curiosus* to the door to watch the *spectaculum* (*Sat.* 26.4)”.

⁵⁴³ On how this works psychologically, see Bartsch 2006 (and chapter 1, 12-3).

I long for my consumptive viewing or my curious reading to acquire a previously unforeseen *utilitas*, just as I want to wake up the morning after eating a whole pint of ice-cream and find out that medical science has recently discovered the health-bringing benefits of Ben and Jerry's. The guilty pleasure of gazing suddenly acquires a new meaning, and I can begin to reframe my narcissistic act as a means to acquire self-knowledge.

So, how can this participation in voyeurism and sudden redemption function in a didactic way? One could say that Apuleius took the very risk that Maximus of Tyre suggested that Socrates took: namely, "hiding beautiful truths under pleasurable words". In Maximus' eyes, this is a "strange and slippery approach" (δεινὸν καὶ σφαλερὸν τὸ χρῆμα), but it seems as if Socrates – or rather, Plato – may have used this approach, considering how impenetrable his dual nature appears; to borrow a phrase from *de Platone*, Plato's *ratio* is decked out in *oratio*,⁵⁴⁴ and this is the very feature that makes Maximus wary of Socrates' allegories. But, whereas Maximus is hesitant to endorse the Platonic model, Apuleius, in creating a kind of 'anti-Socrates' that alludes simultaneously to the real Socrates and a parody of the real Socrates, makes a character who *does* "slip into servile pleasures"⁵⁴⁵ through his misconstrual of Platonic philosophy, only to be "saved" by the grace of Isis. Maximus of Tyre's model seems to me to present a kind of anticipation of Stanley Fish's reader-response theory for *Paradise Lost*, in which the narrator makes the reader "simultaneously a participant in the action and a critic of his

⁵⁴⁴ Cf. Fletcher 2014, who uses this phrase from the *de Platone* as a kind of mantra throughout his text to support the notion that Apuleius recognized how aestheticized Plato's philosophy was.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. *Met.* 11.15, where Lucius is said to have "fallen into servile pleasures at the slippery point of youth" (*lubrico virentis aetatae ad serviles delapsus voluptates*).

own performance”.⁵⁴⁶ And this is certainly one way in which the text-*speculum* could function, as the mirror, particularly in its instantiations in the Imperial Period and the Second Sophistic, had the capacity to separate a ‘judging self’ from an objectified ‘judged self’. The incorporation of the reader into the novel could have that kind of effect; in that case Apuleius would be re-enacting a dialectic model for interacting with his reader. But, another kind of didaxis happens in Apuleius’ appropriation of the Platonic dualism, too – namely, he teaches us a new way of reading Plato. Whereas Maximus of Tyre points out the inconsistency of the character of Socrates, who has one foot in the world of tragedy and the other in the world of comedy, Apuleius shows us how to read that character by playfully re-enacting the very parody that we encounter at the end of the *Symposium*. By doing so, he offers us a choice as to how we want to read this text.

1. Modes of Viewing, Hearing, and Reading in the Prologue:

Part of the problem that scholars have encountered in looking for an entirely σπουδαῖον or an ultimately γέλοιον reading of the *Metamorphoses* is the fact that the Prologue invites us to think of the succeeding novel in terms of both. More precisely, it promises a pleasurable listening experience – “to charm our ears” (*ures permulcere*) – in what could be considered an anti-Thucydidean gesture towards pure *dulcedo* without

⁵⁴⁶ See Fish 1967.

*utilitas*⁵⁴⁷; then, however, it subtly invites us readers to take a deeper look behind the surface of the novel.⁵⁴⁸ The Prologue opens as follows:

At ego tibi sermone isto Milesio varias fabulas conseram auresque tuas benivolas
lepidus susurro permulceam, modo si papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami
inscriptam non spreveris inspicere, figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines
conversas et in se rursus mutuo nexu refectas, ut mireris. exordior. quis ille?⁵⁴⁹

But I will weave variegated tales for you in that Milesian style and I will charm
your benevolent ears with pleasurable whispering, provided that you do not
disdain to look into an Egyptian papyrus inscribed with the cleverness of a Nilotic
reed, that you may marvel at figures and fortunes of men transformed into other
images and turned back into themselves by a mutual knot. I begin my prologue.
Who is that?

⁵⁴⁷ The assessment of Michael Trapp I quoted in the introduction bears repeating (Trapp 2001, 39):

“Whatever other functions it may perform, the Prologue to Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses* strikes a thoroughly hedonistic note, from its fifth word, *Milesio* (‘Milesian’) to its last, *laetaberis* (‘you will revel in this’)”.

⁵⁴⁸ See Scobie 1975, 69 on *susurro*; Schlam 1970, 480 on *permulceam*; Winkler 1985, 186-7 on *Aegyptiam*. Cf. Trapp 2001, 40 who expresses his sympathies with looking for more meaning in the Prologue: “I sympathize with the desire to uncover a further dimension to the Prologue, and would like to do so from one of the same starting points. What I think I find, however, operates in a rather different way to these supposed allusions to mysteries yet to come. I agree in seeing the invocation of another, ‘higher’ discourse, but I think that - for the time being at least - it works to reinforce the promise of the entertainer, rather than to offset it with enigmatic hints of something deeper”.

⁵⁴⁹ I have chosen to retain the text from Hanson’s Loeb rather than the more recent Oxford Classical Text of Zimmerman here, primarily because I take issue with the punctuation of Harrison 1990, restated in Harrison and Winterbottom 2001. I cannot say that I am fully convinced by the Vergilian parallel Harrison cites to the opening lines of the *Aeneid* (Harrison 1990). In part, that is simply because, on Harrison’s new punctuation, *figuras fortunasque...exordior* would still not be the first sentence of the *Met*. But, on a more fundamental level, the phrase *arma virumque* carries a far more traditional thematic announcement than *figuras fortunasque* does, at least in as much as the former phrase is a clear reference to the Homeric texts. Moreover, the other citations Harrison and Winterbottom use to support the construction *exordior* with a direct object always have particular objects, usually having to do with a speech or a story (e.g., *causam*, *orationem*, *fabulam*, etc.; cf. *OLD* 2). That it is a problematic choice to make the phrase *figuras fortunasque* the direct object of *exordior* is perhaps evident from the translation Harrison and Winterbottom themselves append to their text: “I begin *a tale* of men’s shapes and fortunes transformed into different appearances...” (Harrison and Winterbottom 2000, 11; my italics). Clearly, they are borrowing from the construction *exordior fabulam*, found, e.g., in Fulgentius (*Myth.* 1 *praef.* 3), which they cite as a parallel, but are not comfortable translating the text as they have punctuated it. Moreover, on Harrison’s new punctuation, the rhetorical joke embedded in the one-word sentence *exordior* is largely lost, as the verb now points backward rather than forward. And lastly, if we think back to the original, unpunctuated text that Apuleius wrote, it is difficult to imagine an ancient reader taking *figuras fortunasque* as the object pair of *exordior* rather than *mireris*, especially considering that *miror* is a quintessential verb of paradoxography and the phrase that modifies these objects is so explicitly paradoxical. One could object that the postponed *ut* makes the reading a bit jolted, but one can find parallels for this elsewhere in Apuleius (e.g., *Apol.* 61; *Met.* 5.29). There are indeed benefits to Harrison’s punctuation (e.g., splitting up the onerous first sentence, the double cretic clausula *mireris, exordior*, etc.), but I do not think the advantages outweigh the difficulties.

It should be pointed out here that these opening lines have inspired the greatest amount of debate in the world of Apuleius scholarship, both textual and literary critical, ranging from conjectures for a different opening⁵⁵⁰ and continual re-punctuation of the text to a series of intertextual debates.⁵⁵¹ Nearly every word, it has been argued, has a significant allusive relationship to a literary antecedent, and of course, the “satire” camp of readers prefers to see only Plautus, mock-epic, satire, and the genre of Milesian tales.⁵⁵² Though some interpreters before Winkler were willing to propose a deeper and more serious connection to Platonic ideas,⁵⁵³ those who have recently seen allusion to Plato – for instance, in the Phaedran reference to the Nilotic reed – now consider the Prologue’s relationship to Plato to be an invocation of him “not as an ally but as an adversary”.⁵⁵⁴ The most nuanced readings tend to view the Prologue as anticipating and foregrounding its own charm as a way of foreshadowing the “serio-comic” nature of the novel that is to

⁵⁵⁰ *At ego* is an unparalleled opening in Latin literature, for which reason it has been emended (*Ut ego* with a full stop at *exordior* Oudendorp (see Harrison 1998; Tilg 2007); *en ego* Hildebrand (see *GCA* 2007 *ad loc.*)), it has inspired textual critics to posit a lost first sentence (see Landi 1922, cited in Tilg 2014, 25 n. 19), and most recently, it has required elaborate explanation. For instance, Morgan 2001, 161 discusses the dialogic nature of this opening. *GCA* 2007, 63 *ad loc.* suggests that *at* is merely a “colloquial particle” and notes that *at ego* is a combination familiar from dialogue and comedy. Graverini 2012 spends quite a few pages tracing the possible Greek antecedents to this transitional *at ego* (e.g., Xen. *Symp.* 1.1: ἀλλ’ ἐμοί), but eventually concludes that it is a stylistic statement that responds in a way to Callimachus’ famous dictum from the Prologue of the *Aitia*, where Callimachus compares the braying ass to the flying cicada (*Ait.* 1.31-2: θηρὶ μὲν οὐατόεντι πανεῖκελον ὀγκήσαιτο ἄλλος, ἐγὼ δ’ εἴην οὐλαχύς, ὁ πτερόεις). Lastly, Tilg 2014 expands Graverini’s framework, arguing that Apuleius is making a programmatic statement about an informal style, adducing as evidence a discussion of style from pseudo-Aelius Aristides’ *Peri Aphelous Logou* and the Prologue to Eusebius’ *de laudibus Constantini*. He even hazards to make the bold but very interesting suggestion that the original Greek *Onos* opens with the phrase ἀλλ’ ἐγώ, for which *at ego* would merely be a translation.

⁵⁵¹ See, e.g., the articles of Trapp, Gibson, Gowers, and Smith in Kahane and Laird 2001. See also Graverini 2012 for discussion of dense intertextuality in the Prologue.

⁵⁵² See, e.g., May 2006; Harrison 2000a; Harrison and Winterbottom 2001. Cf. the more sensitive reading of Dowden 2006, who sees the Prologue as a mix between Milesian tales and Platonic dialogue.

⁵⁵³ See Schlam 1970; Thibau 1965.

⁵⁵⁴ See Trapp 2001, 41 for the quotation; cf. Kirichenko 2008 for another “comic” reading of the *Phaedrus* in the Prologue.

come,⁵⁵⁵ but even this kind of generic interplay merely acknowledges that there exists a certain amount of *utilitas* – or at the very least, a question about *utilitas* – in an otherwise playful narrative. Ultimately, my suggestion amounts to the claim that the *utilitas* lies, in fact, in the *dulcedo* – that is, by showing readers the “mirror of the text” as a playful re-enactment of a Platonic moment, Apuleius offers to us an embedded choice between pleasurable and philosophical reading, or between Homer or Plato.

To view this opening in the tradition of the didactic “mirror-text”, it would be too easy merely to point out that a number of terms appear – *figura*, *imago*, *mutuus*, etc. – that could feasibly double as mirroring terms (though perhaps such a superficial analysis is *à propos* in the Apuleian framework). Instead, to begin an analysis of this troublesome text, I focus more closely on two largely understudied verbs that hold prominent positions in the Prologue: (1) the mode of viewing that the text requests from its reader (*inspicere*) and (2) the promised affective response to such viewing, “marvel” (*mirari*). After all, the proviso clause *modo si...non spreveris inspicere* represents precisely the condition that Aemilianus failed to achieve in Apuleius’ concluding invective at *Apologia* 16. Recall Apuleius’ closing: if Aemilianus had read a book and then “looked into” (*inviseres*)⁵⁵⁶ a *speculum*, just as Archimedes, the “authorizing” model of mirror-gazing, “looked into a mirror often and diligently” (*inspexerat speculum saepe ac diligenter*),⁵⁵⁷ then he would

⁵⁵⁵ I am referring primarily to the approach of Graverini 2012, who gives a very thorough assessment of many of the allusive structures at work in this text. Though, it should be noted that he ultimately falls in the same camp as Trapp and Kirichenko, as he approvingly quotes Trapp’s “adversary” claim (see p. 21 n. 58).

⁵⁵⁶ I take *inviso* to be an equivalent kind of “looking” to *inspicere*, especially as it is parallel to *inspicere* in the mirror-gazing of Archimedes. Cf. chapter 1, 107 n. 233.

⁵⁵⁷ It is tempting to connect the ‘diligent’ viewing of Archimedes with the *scrupulosus lector*, considering that *diligenter* only shows up in the *Apologia* 4 times, the first of which concerns Maximus “diligently listening” and the last two of which are in regard to Maximus’ “diligent examination” and “diligent reading” of Plato’s *Phaedrus*. That is, just as the diligent mirror-gazing of Archimedes offered to him a

have “marveled” (*mirarere*) at his own ugly face. Then, Apuleius, transitioning to himself, claims – “but I would not marvel” (*at ego non mirer*) – implying that he has acquired self-knowledge through mirror-gazing. In other words, already within the Apuleian corpus, we find a similar proviso clause – “if only you would look into” an object – and the same consequent response – “you would be marveling” at a spectacle (here, Aemilianus’ Thyestes-like face). The condition in the *Apologia* passage, however, is not a proviso clause with its promise of future fulfillment – as we find in the Prologue – but it is already contrary-to-fact. Therefore, from the very first line of the *Metamorphoses*, which opens with an unattested dialogic phrase *at ego* and promises an experience of “marvel” conditioned on “looking”, Apuleius’ *lector scrupulosus* could recall a previous theatrical spectacle-mirror from the *Apologia*, wherein one viewer/listener did not “look into” a text/mirror and as a consequence, failed to acquire the type of self-knowledge that was on offer.

Beyond the simple correspondence between the failed philosophical viewing and unfulfilled marvel of Aemilianus and the offer of a wondrous text-spectacle to the reader of the *Metamorphoses*, the verb *inspicere* is a marked term for philosophical viewing. We may remember from our brief study of this word in the introduction the illustrative example that appears in Horace’s ‘other *Ars Poetica*,’⁵⁵⁸ *Epistles* 1.2, in which the narrator transforms Homer into a philosophical teacher and Odysseus into an exemplary model of viewing. That is, Homer “places [Odysseus] before” (*proponere*) our eyes as a

kind of self-knowledge, so also, Maximus’ diligent reading of Plato gave to him a transcendent knowledge of the οὐράνιος τόπος. Again, the connection between looking in a mirror, listening, and reading a book appears in a subtle way.

⁵⁵⁸ See again the title of Hunter 2014b.

“useful model” (*utile exemplar*) for how one should investigate the world: Odysseus knows how to teach readers wisdom and virtue because he “providently looked into” (*providus ...inspexit*) the cities and customs of other people. As I noted before, *inspicere* is a particularly loaded translation of Homer’s ἰδεν (*Od.* 1.3).⁵⁵⁹ In order to make Odysseus into a philosophical traveler, Horace must, in a sense, enhance the verb of “seeing”.

To see more clearly how *inspicere* works in the Prologue, it will be beneficial now to consider the different types of “viewing” that take place in Apuleius and his contemporaries. We have already seen in this dissertation a number of ways of talking about “looking” into a mirror: Terence’s stern father figure in the *Adelphoi* advocates “looking into the lives of other men as if into a mirror” (*Adel.* 416: *inspicere tanquam in speculum in vitas omnium*) in order to take an *exemplum* for one’s own life; Lucretius describes the act of “looking down into” (4.418: *despicere*) mirroring water as a simultaneously deceptive and philosophical endeavor, which can either delude the viewer or offer a confirmation of Epicurean philosophy⁵⁶⁰; Narcissus “looks down at” the water (3.486: *Quae simul adspexit liquefacta rursus in unda*) in the same way that he “looks at” (3.477: *adspicere*) his lover (*amans*) to nourish his desire; Perseus “looks at the form of Medusa” (4.783: *formam adspexisse Medusae*) through the mirror because *simulacra* of men and beasts “had been transformed” (*conversa*) at the unmediated sight of her; and finally, Seneca uses both *adspicere* and *inspicere*, in *de Ira* (2.36) and *de Clementia* (1.1),

⁵⁵⁹ See Hunter 2014b, 34 n. 2 and Moles 1985, 35.

⁵⁶⁰ Importantly, the only time Lucretius uses this word outside of the context of the mirror is when he describes the “pleasure” (*suave*) of the enlightened Epicurean philosopher in the programmatic passage from book 2; the philosopher “looks down” (*DRN* 2.9: *despicere*) from the lofty tower of philosophy at another’s suffering. Also relevant is the fact that there, the act of looking is related to “charm” as well as “pleasurable delight” (*iucunda voluptas*).

respectively, to talk about looking into mirrors. Particularly relevant to my interest is the fact that Seneca, when he asks Nero to “look into” (*inspicere*) his mirror-text in the *de Clementia*, most likely alludes to the famous passage from Terence that set the precedent for exemplary viewing.⁵⁶¹

But, when we turn to our context in Apuleius, the lack of a reference specifically to a *speculum* perhaps opens up the question of how much Apuleius is alluding to this tradition of viewing in his use of this word in the Prologue. Zimmerman’s assessment which I quoted in the introduction bears repeating:

Remarkably, when the reader is asked not to decline to examine this papyrus, the verb *inspicere* is used...In his *Apology*...Apuleius uses *inspicere* frequently, always with the connotation of scholarly enquiry, close scrutiny, and philosophical curiosity. For even when Apuleius talks about *inspicere in speculum* (‘looking into a mirror’), he presents looking into a mirror as an eminently philosophical occupation. As actual readers we too are invited to carry on our careful examination of the text of the *Metamorphoses*, reflecting on what we see reflected there.⁵⁶²

As Keulen points out, moreover, “*inspicere* [here] may connote carefulness in taking a look at something potentially treacherous”.⁵⁶³ One might add to these sentiments that *inspicere* is by no means a normal word for reading; in fact, in the few contexts that it refers to “looking into” a text, it has more to do with looking up a reference or an item of specialized knowledge than it has to do with reading,⁵⁶⁴ for which reason, Cavallo connects *inspicere* to the careful reading of the *lector scrupulosus*.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶¹ See Braund 2009, 156; see also Mayer 1991.

⁵⁶² See Zimmerman 2001, 255.

⁵⁶³ *GCA* 2007, 71 *ad loc.*

⁵⁶⁴ A glance at the *TLL* entry for this verb in connection with *scripta* (*TLL* I.A.1.a.β) confirms that it is not a normal verb for reading *per se*, but seems more to refer to reference texts (usually *litterae* or *libri*), such as looking up a fact in law tables or studying the contents of a letter to develop an argument. See, e.g., Cato *ad fil. frg.* 1 (cited in Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 29.14): quod bonum sit illorum litteras *inspicere*, non *perdiscere*. Perhaps worthy of mention is the fact that *inspicere* in this instance is juxtaposed to *perdiscere*, thus opening up the

First, let us consider the semantic range of the whole nexus of *-spicere* compounds connected to mirroring as they appear elsewhere in the Apuleian corpus. Apuleius uses all three *-spicere* compounds found above (*inspicere*, *adspicere*, and *despicere*) to various ends and with reference to different types of viewing. For instance, the verb *despicere* occurs five times in the Apuleian corpus, but only three of them concern viewing⁵⁶⁶; of those, two instances seem to allude (ironically) to Lucretius' usage of this verb in book 2 of the *DRN*. Other than the passages in book 4, where Lucretius discusses "looking down" into mirror-surfaces, *despicere* only appears one other time in the *DRN*, that is, in the famous passage where the Epicurean philosopher "looks down" from the "lofty temple" (*edita templa*) of serene doctrine. Two figures in Apuleius' corpus also "look down" from a lofty place. The first appears at the opening of book 4 of the *Metamorphoses*, after the ass Lucius must defend himself against a young man who is attacking him. After he lays the man out on the ground, his wife "look[s] down from a lofty place" (4.3: *ex edito despexit*) at her suffering husband, much like the hypothetical philosopher on a hill in Lucretius. In the end, though, in a rejection of Epicurean detachment, she comes down to the plain in order to fight with Lucius. In a similar ironic reference to Lucretius' lofty temple of philosophy (*Fl.* 2), Apuleius compares the vision of the eyes with that of the soul in assessing the character of a man. In a fragment that has generally been understood as a response to Epicurean faith in the senses,⁵⁶⁷ Apuleius

(Platonic) question of whether one can look without learning. Cf. also Keulen's further point in *GCA* 2007, 71 *ad loc.*: "usually *inspicere*, in the sense of taking a look at a written text, is referred to as an indispensable preliminary action in order to gain knowledge of its content, like the action of opening a book".

⁵⁶⁵ See Cavallo 1996, 41 also cited in *GCA* 2007.

⁵⁶⁶ *Met.* 6.11; *Met.* 4.3; and *Fl.* 2.24.

⁵⁶⁷ See, e.g., Lee 2005, 66-7.

meditates on the difference between the vision of a human and an eagle; men cannot see further than a stone's throw, as Homer says, but the eagle, which has "risen itself up high by its wings" (*altissime sublimauit euecta alis*), "looks down on all things" (*cuncta despiciens*) from its lofty heights, "discerning" (*cernens*) all men and beasts below "with one glance" (*uno optutu*). This is a phenomenon that Richard Fletcher has labeled "the 'catascopic' flight of philosophy", which he links to the *Phaedran* pursuit of Icarianism (discussed in the previous chapter).⁵⁶⁸ In the case of *Fl.* 2, though, it is important that the eagle is meant to establish the insufficiency of human vision over against the sight of the soul.⁵⁶⁹ However we conjecture that the fragment concluded, what matters here is that Apuleius seems to have understood what Lucretius was trying to do with his preferred type of "viewing". As we will see, Apuleius chooses the theoretic model of "looking into" something – that is, philosophical investigation *beneath* the surface of reality – rather than Lucretius' synoptic model of gazing down from above.

Adspicere also appears a number of times in the Apuleian corpus, but almost all of these cases have to do with superficial viewing that leads to desire – narrative and erotic desire of the sort we saw in chapter 2. Sometimes, *adspicere* refers to an encounter with a spectacle (*spectaculum*; *spectamen*); in these cases, it is frequently marked as autopsy of marvelous phenomena, emphatically highlighted with a phrase such as "with my very own eyes".⁵⁷⁰ Often, rather than bringing about the "desire for learning"

⁵⁶⁸ See Fletcher 2014, 125-45.

⁵⁶⁹ The fragment begins with the anecdote that Socrates required a young man to speak before assessing his character on the grounds that "men must be analyzed by the vision of the eyes, but by the sight of the mind and the gaze of the soul" (*etenim arbitrabatur homines non oculorum, sed mentis acie et animi obtutu considerandos*).

⁵⁷⁰ See, e.g., Lucius' encounter with the sword swallower (*Met.* 1.4: *isto gemino obtutu circulatorum aspexi*); Mereo stabbing Socrates in the throat (*Met.* 1.13: *Haec ego meis oculis aspexi*); Photis looking at

(*discendi cupido*) that Aemilianus would have experienced through philosophical mirror-gazing (*inspicere*), this type of viewing either occurs as a result of narrative/erotic desire, or inspires it in the viewer. For instance, Lucius, stirred up with curiosity at the prospect of hearing marvelous *fabulae* and “thirsty for novelty” (*sititor alioquin novitatis*), describes how he “saw” the spectacle of the sword swallower in Athens (1.4: *isto gemino obtutu circulatorem aspexi*) in order to encourage Aristomenes to tell his tale. As a direct result of hearing Aristomenes’ story, Lucius wakes up “generally anxious and excessively desirous” (*anxius alioquin et nimis cupidus*); excited at the prospect of being in the land of magic, he “curiously inspects everything” (*curiose singula considerabam*) at the opening of book 2 and notes that there was nothing in Thessaly “that was what it seemed to be upon looking at it” (*quod aspiciens id esse crederem quod esset*). Curiously, Lucius notes here that there may be a depth to the objects he gazes upon – there may be something hidden behind them – but he does not engage in the kind of philosophical viewing that would enable him to see it. Rather, he remains on the surface level of appearances, and gestures towards what he believes is beneath the rocks, trees, rivers, statues, and herd animals. As we saw in chapter 2, in the *ekphrasis* of Byrrhena’s atrium, *auctor*-Lucius invites us readers to “bend over and look down” (*pronus aspexeris*) into the mirroring water, which I argued was tantamount to an invitation to partake in narrative fantasy; indeed, Lucius’ ensuing conversation about the deceptive spectacle and his future entanglements makes him once again *curiosus alioquin* to see some magic.

the spectacle of Lucius’ transformation (*Met.* 3.25: *quae ubi primum me talem aspexit...*); Lucius seeing the ‘funereal spectacle’ of Thrasyleon (*Met.* 4.20: *Miserum funestumque spectamen aspexi...*). Psyche explaining to her sisters the ‘spectacle’ of her husband (*Met.* 5.26: *conscio lumine vultus eius aspexi, video mirum divinumque prorsus spectaculum...*).

Similarly, in book 3, Pamphile reveals the violence “of her magic art” (3.15: *magis artis huius*), whenever she “longingly looks at a young man of beautiful form” (*citulae formulae iuvenem quempiam libenter aspexit*); and Psyche, at 5.26, describes to her sisters the “marvelous and divine spectacle” (*mirum divinumque... spectaculum*) of her mysterious husband’s face and the consequent desire that came when she “saw” it in the light (*conscio lumine vultus eius aspexit*). A scene of particular interest, though, is the opening of Apuleius’ philosophical treatise, *de Platone et eius Dogmate*, in which Socrates, upon “seeing” (DP 1.1.23: *adspicere*) Plato’s face, was able to divine his “innermost character from his external appearance” (*ingeniumque intimum de exteriore...facie*). We may note that, in a majority of these examples, this type of viewing relates to form and bodies, including bodies in motion. We can compare *adspicere*, then, to the Ovidian “viewing” in the mirror, which also always relays forms and bodies (cf. 3.477 and 4.783, above). In fact, whereas the Lucretian viewing from above is subtly rejected or parodied in the Apuleian model, this type of looking seems to provide a model of seeing opposite to *inspicere*. In the *de Platone* passage, rather than testing the character of Plato through discourse and discussion – as Apuleius himself recommends in *Florida* 2⁵⁷¹ – the Socrates of this treatise looks upon Plato’s external form and somehow divines what is inside.

⁵⁷¹ *Florida* 2 begins with an anecdote about Socrates, in which he claims not to see a young man until he speaks: *At non itidem maior meus Socrates, qui cum decorum adolescentem et diutule tacentem conspicatus foret, ‘ut te uideam,’ inquit, ‘aliquid et loquere.’ scilicet Socrates tacentem hominem non uidebat; etenim arbitrabatur homines non oculorum, sed mentis acie et animi obtutu considerandos.*

Alternatively, I suggest that *inspicere* could provide a Latin translation for Plato's verbs for transcendent seeing (e.g. καθορᾶν, θεωρεῖν, θεᾶσθαι, etc.),⁵⁷² and as such, represents a deeply philosophical viewing – one that actually looks beneath the appearances rather than noting the delusions and delighting in them. In the *Metamorphoses*, *inspicere* appears only one time other than in the Prologue - not insignificantly, when Psyche ('Soul') tries to gaze upon true beauty hidden in Proserpina's box (*Met.* 6.19.7) in what seems to me to be yet another (unnoticed) allusion to the 'Soul' in the *Phaedrus* attempting to have a Platonic ascent through viewing.⁵⁷³ But, putting that aside, Apuleius' usage of this word in the *Apologia* always refers to mirror-gazing and philosophical inspection. More precisely, the concept of *inspectio* is always philosophically inflected in Apuleius,⁵⁷⁴ and either represents an "inspection" of the self through mirror-gazing or relates to an analysis of the outside world (e.g., through "inspecting" fish) in which the viewer strips away external reality. Indeed, this word appears at many points in the *Apologia*, as we saw in chapter 1, where Apuleius employs mock-Platonic notions of philosophical viewing in a mirror (cf. esp. the rhetorical conclusion at 103: '*specula inspicis: debet philosophus*'); and if we look at the

⁵⁷² For transcendent seeing in Plato, see Nightingale 2004; Nightingale 2005.

⁵⁷³ I do not know of anyone who has argued for this, but it seems fairly reasonable to think that, in an allegory about the disembodied soul trying to get a glimpse at beauty - especially given the *communis opinio* that *Cupid & Psyche* is meant to allude to Plato's *Phaedrus* - a scene where 'Soul' looks at beauty and faints out of stupefaction is directly engaging with the theme of visualizing the Form of beauty in the *Phaedrus*. It is not a stretch, therefore, to assume that *inspicio* in this context is meant to refer to a transcendent kind of philosophical viewing, as I will suggest in what follows.

⁵⁷⁴ Cf. Hunink 2001, 59 *ad loc.* *inspectio*: "Looking in a mirror is obviously the most common form of using it... Meanwhile, the more common sense of 'theoretical examination' (*OLD* s.v. 3) is also relevant here in view of the paragraphs to come (esp. in 15-16). The double meaning is exploited in 16.6 *inspexerat*."

developing semantic range of the word around Apuleius' time, it will be confirmed that this verb always relates to philosophical inspection, frequently in front of a *speculum*.

As a proof of this, we may look at the usage of *inspicere* in the works of a close antecedent to Apuleius in the philosophical tradition, namely Seneca. In every instance, the verb relates to philosophical (or divinatory)⁵⁷⁵ inspection: frequently, it refers to self-inspection with a view to self-knowledge⁵⁷⁶; very often, it concerns a general philosophical investigation, as in introductory exhortations (“let us investigate”)⁵⁷⁷ or in directions for philosophical pursuit of knowledge⁵⁷⁸; but, perhaps the most relevant for our purposes, aside from the text-*speculum* of the *de Clementia*, are the citations where Seneca alludes to “inspecting” the true character of a man – by which he means penetrating deep beneath the surface level and superficial modes of defining selfhood. In this vein, at *de Ira* 3.26, Seneca exhorts his reader to “look into” the *habitus* of his mind to understand his own true character; at *Epist.* 22.10, he tells his reader that one must “look at a man’s true feelings” (*si verum adfectum eorum inspicias*) in order to know him; and most tellingly, at *Epist.* 76.32, Seneca explains to his reader that if one wishes to know a man’s true worth, one must strip away all the adornments and fancy clothes (i.e., social circumstances and external appearances) and “look into him naked, to see what sort of a man he is” (*qualis sit, nudum inspice*) – just as Socrates did with Alcibiades in

⁵⁷⁵ The only instance of the latter is *Thyestes* 757.

⁵⁷⁶ See, e.g., *de Tranq.* 6.1; *de Brev. Vit.* 2.5.7; *de Benefic.* 6.38.5.6;.

⁵⁷⁷ See, e.g., the programmatic opening of *de Benefic.* 2.1 (*inspiciamus*); *de Benefic.* 5.2; *Epist.* 20.11.4.

⁵⁷⁸ A particularly resonant example of this is in *Epist.* 33.5.3, where Seneca says that one cannot glean wisdom by merely “getting a taste of it” (*degustare*; e.g. by means of epitomes and such), but rather, the whole of philosophy “must be inspected” (*tibi inspicienda sunt*). This seems an interesting comparanda for the character Lucius we soon meet who loves to taste things without careful inspection (cf. *Met.* 1.2, where Lucius is a “thirster for novelty”, and 1.26, where he has “feasted on fables alone”).

*Alcibiades I.*⁵⁷⁹ Therefore, while *inspicere* could appear to be limited in this time period to a rather general philosophical kind of viewing – akin, perhaps, to Plato’s ἐπισκοπεῖν – it seems more often to relate to the deep, inner type of viewing – as in seeing the metaphysical self, or soul, buried behind the layers of the social self (i.e., chapter 1). While there are many objects one can look at with these *-spicere* compounds, gazing upon the philosophical text-*speculum* and undertaking self-inspection seem to be accomplished primarily through the *inspicere* type of viewing in the second century. This fact could lend further insight into Seneca’s complex text-mirror in the *de Clementia* (see ch. 1), which he writes (*scribere*) to function as a *speculum* and which, he claims, will “give pleasure to look into” (*iuuat inspicere*).⁵⁸⁰ But, whereas the philosophical benefits of Seneca’s text-*speculum*, which he writes primarily for its *utilitas*, are also couched in terms of *dulcedo* (*voluptas*; *iuuare*), Apuleius’ use of this philosophical term is very odd in the context of the Prologue, where the primary type of viewing the narrating-*ego* offers is, according to most readers, *dulce* and decidedly *inutile*.⁵⁸¹ If the purpose of Apuleius’ text is strictly *divertissement*, as the narrator seems to promise, then why not ask the reader to employ a more superficial type of viewing, such as *adspicere*? If the goal is only to instill in readers a desire to keep reading at a superficial level and to enjoy the

⁵⁷⁹ See *Alc. I* 132a-b, where Socrates claims that, though Erechtheus is “fair-of-face” (εὐπρόσωπος), “it is necessary to see a man stripped” (ἀλλ’ ἀποδύντα χρὴ αὐτὸν θεάσασθαι) before one can assess his character.

⁵⁸⁰ In the interest of precision, it should be said that the actual direct object of *inspicere* is *bonam conscientiam*. This is important, however, for two reasons: (1) there’s another level of conflation going on here, wherein the didactic narrator-mirror-text also provides a means of ‘looking at good conscience,’ or in other words, penetrating deep into the mind of the self, and (2) *inspicere* is chosen as the verb most likely to allude to Terence’s famous exemplary mirror of men’s lives (see Braund 2009, 156 *ad loc.*; Malaspina 2001, 234 *ad loc.*), thus making it reasonable that *inspicere* is also intended to conjure up the sense of mirror-gazing.

⁵⁸¹ It is strange to me that, with the copious amount of work that has been done on the Prologue, no one seems to have fully recognized how charged this word is with hidden meaning. Again, Cavallo 1996, 41 comes the closest to realizing its full import.

pleasure of viewing, as in the mirroring water of Byrrhena's atrium, then why ask us to look behind the words of the papyrus? At the very least, we must see how Apuleius sets us up for a mode of philosophical viewing with this proviso clause, embedding in the Prologue the ambivalent status of this text and thereby, establishing an aporetic "horizon of expectation".

If we return to the line in the Prologue, the text promises that, if the reader employs this kind of "philosophical viewing" (*inspicere*), he or she will "marvel at the figures and fortunes of men transformed into other images and returned back into themselves by a mutual knot." In chapter 1, I considered the philosophical tradition of "marvel" as one of the frames of reference through which Apuleius' invective of Aemilianus ought to be considered. As we saw there, in Plato and Aristotle, "marvel" can represent the beginning of philosophical knowledge, inspiring the intellectual curiosity that leads to exploration; in Platonic texts, however, there is an alternative kind of "marveling", in which θαυμάζειν can refer to a kind of religious encounter with an awesome spectacle, such as with the Form of beauty in the *Symposium* or the *Phaedrus*. In the prologues of novels roughly contemporaneous to the *Metamorphoses*, "marvel" is indeed an important feature of the reader's experience of the text. Prior to Luca Graverini's 2010 contribution, 'Amore, 'dolcezza,' stupore. Romanzo antico e filosofia,' scholars generally understood the promise of 'marvel' in the *Met.*'s Prologue as "perhaps reflect[ing] a revived contemporary interest in paradoxographical literature"⁵⁸²; Ken Dowden, for instance, in his discussion of predecessors to Apuleius' Prologue, borrows

⁵⁸² GCA 2007, 73 *ad. loc.*, who cites Mason 1978, 8 as the first proponent of such a view. See also Scobie 1975, 71 *ad. loc.*

the term *Wundergeschichte* to describe Apuleius' *mimesis* of Lucian "doing a parodic piece of paradoxography".⁵⁸³ Graverini responds to this interpretive school by invoking the philosophical tradition of wonder instead and demonstrating how allusion specifically to this tradition was *en vogue* in the Second Sophistic. Longus' *Daphnis & Chloe* opens with the unnamed-narrator "looking" (ιδόντα) and "marveling" (θαυμάσαντα) at a painting, which inspires him to write his novel as an "offering to love" (ἀνάθημα μὲν ἑρωτι); similarly, we know from Photius' summary of Antonius Diogenes' *Incredible Wonders Beyond Thule*⁵⁸⁴ that the main narrative seems to be inspired from an inscription on a cedar coffin, which read, "stranger, whoever you are, open (me), in order that you may learn about marvels" (ὦ ξένε, ὅστις εἶ, ἀνοιξον, ἵνα μάθῃς ἃ θαυμάζεις).⁵⁸⁵ This second example, in particular, resonates well with my analysis of extraspective vs. introspective mirroring, in so far as the cedar coffin seems to close the object of marvel within itself, and must be opened up – as we will see viewers do to Socrates in the *Symposium*⁵⁸⁶ – in order to see what is hidden underneath. Similarly to the *Metamorphoses*, both of these prologues appear to straddle the line between philosophy (especially Platonic philosophy) and a poetic kind of marveling that can be traced all the way back to Homer.

While I believe Graverini is right to connect the *mirari* of the Prologue to philosophical marveling, I would argue that the picture is both more nuanced and more

⁵⁸³ See Dowden 2001, 124. The term *Wundergeschichte* comes from Reitzenstein 1912, 70-1.

⁵⁸⁴ Although this text is undatable (see Morgan 2007), we may note that Photius believed it predated all the other novels: "Ἔστι δ', ὡς ἔοικεν, οὗτος χρόνος πρεσβύτερος τῶν τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐσπουδακόντων διαπλάσαι, οἷον Λουκιανοῦ, Λουκίου, Ἰαμβλίου, Ἀχιλλέως Τατίου, Ἡλιοδώρου τε καὶ Δαμασκίου.

⁵⁸⁵ See Photius *Bibl.* 116.

⁵⁸⁶ The word ἀνοιξον, derived from ἀνοίγνυμι, even shares a root verb with διοίγνυμι, the word which Alcibiades uses to exhort the other symposiasts to "open" (*Symp.* 215b3, διοιχθέντες; 221e1, διοιγομένοις; 222a1, διοιγομένους) the Silenic-Socrates up in order to see the marvelous statues within (ἐνδοθεν).

specific. Long predating the philosophical tradition of “marvel” that leads to knowledge and understanding is a tradition in archaic poetry of depicting θαύματα ιδέσθαι, or “marvels to behold”; in these passages, the poet is usually describing a beautiful piece of craftsmanship, often something constructed by the gods (e.g., the Shield of Achilles, Pandora, the pseudo-Hesiodic Shield of Heracles, etc.) in an *ekphrasis* that incorporates or immerses the reader/viewer into the scene, such as the reflective Shield of Achilles.⁵⁸⁷ As Raymond Prier has shown, “wonder” is fundamentally connected to vision in archaic phenomenology, and the sight of the hero often conjures up marvel in the viewer.⁵⁸⁸ In the *Odyssey*, in particular, 3 of the 4 θαύματα ιδέσθαι are woven garments that cover goddesses⁵⁸⁹; and perhaps more to my point, a recurring θαῦμα throughout the epic is the metamorphosis of Odysseus from old, raggedy stranger into glimmering hero – a spectacle that viewers witness with astonishment.⁵⁹⁰ It seems unlikely, indeed, that a work such as the *Metamorphoses*, which presents itself as an *Odyssey* of sorts and promises to “weave” together a series of variegated visual-aural experiences, would open with the two commands to “look in” and “marvel” without intending to alert the reader to the archaic, and particularly Homeric precedent. More important than allusion to the

⁵⁸⁷ See, e.g., Squire 2014 for a treatment of the narrative mirror of the Homeric Shield in *Il.* 18.

⁵⁸⁸ See Prier 1989. See also Neer 2010. Cf. Nightingale 2004, 256, where she traces elements of what she calls “Platonic wonder” in Homeric and archaic wonder: “In Homer and archaic literature, *thaumazein* and its cognates are very rarely used in the sense of puzzlement, perplexity, or curiosity. In fact, *thauma* is never confined to merely cognitive experiences: archaic wonder is both cognitive and affective, intellectual and emotional, ranging from the feelings of reverence and awe to admiration and amazement...One quite complex form of archaic wonder is characterized by the feeling of reverence for something that is perceived as both divine and yet also kindred to the human viewer. Here, a person ‘looks with wonder’ at something that is both similar and different, kindred and strange.”

⁵⁸⁹ At 6.306, Nausicaa promises Odysseus that Arete will be ‘weaving’ (στροφάω) sea-purple wool, a ‘marvel to behold’; at 8.366, a bard describes Aphrodite’s lovely garment, a θαῦμα ιδέσθαι, which inspires the bardic song; and lastly, at 13.108, the Nymphs in the grove are ‘weaving’ (ὀφθαίνειν) sea-purple garments.

⁵⁹⁰ See the responses of Nausicaa and the viewers of the hero in Arete’s court (*Od.* 8.459; *Od.* 7. 144-5). On this phenomenon, see Buxton 2009, 29-48.

θαύμα ιδέσθαι tradition, though, I suggest Apuleius recognizes that Plato, too, is responding to this tradition when he constructs his own θαύμα ιδέσθαι in the “mirror of Socrates” at the end of the *Symposium*.

As Richard Neer has argued, it is precisely that archaic poetic tradition and its complex relationship with statuary, or ἀγάλματα, to which Plato responds and which he challenges in dialogues such as *Theaetetus*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*, where definitions of philosophy or erotic love are explored through the effect that marvel has on a viewer of εἰδωλα or εἰκόνες.⁵⁹¹ In this vein, Neer says of *Theaetetus*, the dialogue in which “wonder” is said to be “the beginning of philosophy” (cf. chapter 1):

As in *Phaedrus*, Plato turns the traditional vocabulary of beholding to his own ends in order to suggest a philosophical alternative to traditional wonder. Theaetetus is the specimen case of the new θαύμα ιδέσθαι.⁵⁹²

Moreover, Moritz Schuller, in his dissertation on the mirror-of-self-knowledge tradition, has also convincingly shown that Socrates is portrayed by Alcibiades at the end of the *Symposium* as a θαύμα ιδέσθαι – one that inspires marvel both through verbal and visual media.⁵⁹³ To add nuance to both of these analyses, though, we must see that “marvel” in Plato is ambivalent – a Janus-faced creature – and its relationship to *mimesis* and the mirror is more complicated. For instance, in *Republic* 10, Plato’s most famous discussion of *mimesis*, the master imitator who “makes all the things each individual craftsman does” (*Rep.* 10.596c2: ὃς πάντα ποιεῖ, ὅσαπερ εἰς ἕκαστος τῶν χειροτεχνῶν) by carrying around a mirror (κάτοπτρον) is first said to be a “marvelous man” (596c4: θαυμαστὸν

⁵⁹¹ See Neer 2010 generally, and pp. 57-68 in particular.

⁵⁹² Neer 2010, 64.

⁵⁹³ See Schuller 1998, 96-119.

ἄνδρα) and a “marvelous sophist” (596d1: πάνυ θαυμαστόν...σοφιστήν).⁵⁹⁴ In the *Laws*, too, the Athenian discusses how if there were a contest for producing pleasure in an audience, people “such as Homer” (καθάπερ Ὅμηρος) would participate and the person to win would be the one who “produced marvels” (θαύματα ἐπιδεικνύς).⁵⁹⁵ Concerning these Platonic episodes of marvel, Penelope Murray argues that θαυμαστόν in these contexts “contains more than a hint of irony”,⁵⁹⁶ but I would propose that marvel and its philosophical value is predicated in Platonic texts on the viewer and the type of viewing experience he or she expects. In other words, the “mirror of Homer”, which Socrates implicitly refers to in resorting to the κάτοπτρον as an analogy for Homeric poetry, is misleading or distorting because the viewer/listener perceives the object in the wrong context and primarily expects mere pleasure out of the encounter. In *Theaetetus*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*, the marvel that comes about through visual/aural engagement with a wondrous object happens in the appropriate context – e.g., in a Platonic idealized erotic encounter or through a dialectic encounter with an interlocutor – thereby transforming the marvel from uncritical, archaic wonder at beautiful objects of pleasure to the appropriate philosophical wonder at objects beyond perception but experienced dimly through perception. If Socrates at the end of the *Symposium*, presented as a new and different kind of θαύμα ιδέσθαι, provides a mirror of self-knowledge to Alcibiades, as Schuller argues,⁵⁹⁷ then Plato implicitly asks the reader of the dialogue to choose

⁵⁹⁴ We may also note that the conclusion of this argument is as follows: μηδὲν ἄρα θαυμάζωμεν εἰ καὶ τοῦτο ἄμυδρόν τι τυγχάνει ὄν πρὸς ἀλήθειαν (*Rep.* 10.597a11). A philosopher ought not to marvel at things that are “dim” (ἄμυδρός) in relation to the truth. We may compare this scene to the ἄμυδρὰ ὄργανα (i.e. our eyes) with which we see the “similarities” (ὁμοιώματα) of the Forms (*Phaedr.* 250b1ff.).

⁵⁹⁵ See *Laws* 2.658a-c.

⁵⁹⁶ See Murray 1996, 183 *ad loc.* *Rep.* 398a4-6 on θαυμαστόν.

⁵⁹⁷ Schuller 1998.

which type of visual/aural spectacle he or she prefers, the Homeric or the Platonic. In foregrounding “looking”, “listening”, and “wondering” in the Prologue of the *Met.*, Apuleius re-enacts this Platonic maneuver and asks his reader to decide at the outset what type of visual/aural experience he or she hopes to have with this text and what kind of reader he or she would like to be. And this decision between “serious” and “playful” modes of “reading” and “viewing” is not merely a choice between Plato and Homer, but is, in fact, a choice that Plato forces his readers to make – especially in the case of Alcibiades, who represents, perhaps, a viewer that made the wrong choice when looking into the mirror of Socrates.

2. The εἰκόνες of Socrates in the Symposium:

Now that we have meditated on the mode of viewing and the attendant reaction of wonder invited in the Prologue, it is fitting to look at the elements that, I suggest, signal the intertextual relationship between the opening of the *Metamorphoses* and the closing of the *Symposium*. For the sake of seeing Apuleius’ allusive method as teaching us a way of reading Plato, I will focus only on the *Symposium* in the following pages, analyzing how Alcibiades’ speech represents not only a comic depiction of the figure of Socrates – one that we will see reincarnated in the character of Lucius – but also a parody of Socrates’ sublime speech on ἔρως. Underlying this thread of argument is the notion that Socrates implicitly represents a mirror of self-knowledge in this scene,⁵⁹⁸ and that Alcibiades could be considered a failed interpreter or a confused viewer. Recent

⁵⁹⁸ See, e.g., Schuller 1998 and Neer 2010.

scholarship on the *Symposium* has recognized that Alcibiades’ “satyric and silenic drama” (τὸ σατυρικόν σου δράμα τοῦτο καὶ σιληνικόν), much like an actual satyr play, is parasitic on Socrates’ sublime recounting of Diotima’s description of ἔρως; that is to say, though he never actually heard Socrates’ speech, Alcibiades incorporates certain elements of it – e.g., stripping away the external appearances, marveling at the wondrous object beneath, etc. – but parodies them in a comic appropriation.⁵⁹⁹ Thus, in Alcibiades’ failed interpretation, one can find a precedent for parodies of Plato already in Plato. The disparate threads of this dissertation will all converge in the figure of Socrates in this moment of the *Symposium*, who provides one of the primary models for Lucius throughout the *Metamorphoses*.

Let us begin with an analysis of the *Symposium*. Just before Alcibiades bursts into the symposium, Socrates is finishing his sublime encomium of ἔρως through the mouthpiece of Diotima. This speech is a didactic text, and its utility is primarily for teaching listeners and readers to climb the ladder to the Forms. In other words, Socrates teaches us about witnessing unmediated beauty, or as Diotima says, “gazing upon uniform, divine beauty itself” (αὐτὸ τὸ θεῖον καλὸν...μονοειδὲς κατιδεῖν). Already in the mind of the listener/reader is the marvel of experiencing the kind of idealized Platonic viewing we discussed in chapter 3 – i.e., the winged flight of the metaphysical soul. Furthermore, the unmediated Form is most certainly a spectacle of marvel, as Diotima

⁵⁹⁹ See Bury 1932, lx-lxii for an early treatment of all of the elements from earlier speeches that Alcibiades incorporates into his own, particularly from Socrates’ speech. Cf. Sheffield 2001, 187-8 for an exhaustive list and a more up-to-date interpretation of Bury’s analyses. Important for my point, the appropriation of elements from Socrates’ speech was already noticed in antiquity, e.g., by Maximus of Tyre (see *Phil. Orat.* 18, where he lists all of qualities Socrates shares with *Erōs*). It is not far-fetched, therefore, to assume that another Middle Platonist, Apuleius, picked up on Alcibiades’ satyr drama of Socrates’ sublime speech, and re-enacted it in his own work.

calls it a “wondrous vision” (210e: κατόψεταί τι θαυμαστόν). This is not the type of philosophical marvel, though, that I discussed in chapter 1 – the wonder that leads the philosopher to explore and to learn, eventually dispelling the confusion. On the contrary, as Andrea Nightingale has shown, Plato cleverly demonstrates this to be a different kind of marvel – on the order of archaic marvel at a θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, which incorporates both religious and erotic elements into the visual experience.⁶⁰⁰ Plato appropriates the archaic θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι precisely by introducing the conversation between Socrates and Diotima in terms of philosophical marvel: the former type of wonder, which is equivalent to confusion, is dispelled by Diotima’s explanation, but it is replaced, in turn, by a mystical kind of wonder, for which Diotima employs the language of the Eleusinian mysteries.⁶⁰¹

It is in this context of the sublime, idealized Platonic vision and the marvel that attends such a sight that Alcibiades drunkenly bursts into the party and delivers a mock-encomium of Socrates. In Alcibiades’ masterful parody of Socrates’ speech, Socrates himself becomes the object of marvel, and just as in the case of the θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι where “a person ‘looks with wonder’ at something that is both similar and different, kindred and strange” (see n. 600 below for the quotation), the great teacher is transformed into

⁶⁰⁰ See Nightingale 2004, 256, where she traces elements of what she calls “Platonic wonder” in Homeric and archaic wonder: “In Homer and archaic literature, *thaumazein* and its cognates are very rarely used in the sense of puzzlement, perplexity, or curiosity. In fact, *thauma* is never confined to merely cognitive experiences: archaic wonder is both cognitive and affective, intellectual and emotional, ranging from the feelings of reverence and awe to admiration and amazement... One quite complex form of archaic wonder is characterized by the feeling of reverence for something that is perceived as both divine and yet also kindred to the human viewer. Here, a person ‘looks with wonder’ at something that is both similar and different, kindred and strange”. Again, Neer 2010 provides an excellent analysis of Plato’s appropriation of archaic marvel in his philosophical project.

⁶⁰¹ See *Symp.* 205a-b, 207c-d, and 208b-c (all cited in Nightingale 2004, 258) for the interplay with the former, philosophical kind of wonder. See Nightingale 2004, 259 for a description of the latter kind of marvel: “Here, the activity of beholding the Form of Beauty - which is the activity of *theoria* - is described as a ‘wondrous’ vision of ‘divine beauty’... This experience of wonder - what I call ‘Platonic wonder’ - *accompanies* (her italics) the vision of the Form. It includes awe, reverence, and astonishment, and is therefore quite different from the perplexed form of wonder”. See also Hunter 2004, 92-3.

ἁγάλματα θεῶν, or “holy statues of gods”. What is the effect of Alcibiades’ abrupt and sudden entrance into a dialogue that, up until this point, recounted a relatively sober, philosophical discussion of love that reached its apex in Socrates’ retelling of the speech of Diotima? As Scott and Welton suggest:

The dialogue might well have ended at the point at which Diotima holds out the promise that after a lifetime of following *Erōs* in the right way, the true lover may be permitted a glimpse of the Beautiful itself. Employing the language of initiation typical of the mystery religions, the almost ethereal passage in which Diotima describes how the vision of true beauty yields real virtue and a share of immortality is clearly the apex of the dialogue. Hence, it might have seemed fitting to allow the philosopher to have the last word on the matter and to have ended the dialogue at its highest height. But Plato does not permit the dialogue to end here, choosing instead to have Alcibiades...crash the party and unsettle the lofty mood reached just prior to the end of Socrates’ speech.⁶⁰²

Indeed, it is precisely the inconcinnity between the sublime heights of Socrates’ speech and the bawdy, komastic entrance of the drunken Dionysiac figure – the mixture of “high” and “low” elements – that led Wilamowitz famously to call the *Symposium* a comedy and the *Phaedo* a tragedy.⁶⁰³ A more up-to-date position, which has been *en vogue* ever since Diskin Clay’s 1975 article, is that the *Symposium* is a tragi-comedy, or is “serio-comic”.⁶⁰⁴ In this vein, Richard Hunter explains:

Alcibiades’ first words, heard from the court outside, work like a pun on the speeches of Socrates and Diotima...[She] has just explained the way in which each of us may be led toward the truly good (*agathon*) and beautiful, but it was not a flute-girl and slaves she had in mind for that role; the serious (*spoudaion*) and the metaphysical have given way to the humorous (*geloion*) and the all too physical with brilliant suddenness.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰² Scott and Welton 2008, 155-6.

⁶⁰³ See Wilamowitz 1920, 356.

⁶⁰⁴ See Clay 1975, for an excellent analysis of how Socrates’ physical location between Agathon and Aristophanes mirrors his role as an intermediary between tragedy and comedy, between humans and the divine, and between this world and the universe of the Forms at the top of the ladder. Cf. Sheffield 2006 for a more recent treatment of “serio-comedy” in the *Symposium*.

⁶⁰⁵ Hunter 2004, 98.

Falling from the sublime heights of Socrates' account of ἔρως to the comically "low" satyr drama, the reader is left in a state of bewilderment, or ἀπορία, at the very end of the dialogue, faced with the same conundrum that Wilamowitz was trying to solve.

And so, with the terms of idealized viewing set out by Diotima, Alcibiades begins his "satyric" encomium of Socrates, which he promises to do through two εἰκόνες, or "images", that Socrates will no doubt find laughable (ἐπὶ τὰ γελοιότερα), even though they are meant in all seriousness (lit. "for the sake of truth": τοῦ ἀληθοῦς ἕνεκα). In the first εἰκόν, Socrates is similar to those Silenus statues one finds in local shops, which, when one strips away their external covering (διχάδε διοιχθέντες), one finds ἀγάλματα θεῶν hidden within their satyr-like bodies. This image, however, does not fully depict the complexity of the spectacle of Socrates because it only encompasses the visual element of the experience. A true encounter with Socrates is synaesthetic.⁶⁰⁶ To complete the eulogy, then, Alcibiades resorts to a second, similar but more *à propos* εἰκόν: Socrates is most akin to Marsyas, the satyr famous for his mastery of the αὐλός. This analogy completes the picture because the marvel-inducing experience of Socrates happens not only through a visual encounter but also through an aural one. His likeness to Marsyas lies in his ability to charm his listeners: whereas Marsyas requires an αὐλός to accomplish his musical enchantment, Socrates needs only "naked words" (ψιλοὶ λόγοι).⁶⁰⁷ In turn, "marvel" at the spectacle of Socrates, as Ruby Blondell points out, becomes *the* recurrent theme of Alcibiades' speech.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ See Rosen 2012 for a useful reading of the role of synaesthesia in the transcendent experience of the viewer in the *Symposium*.

⁶⁰⁷ I am intentionally translating ψιλός here a bit provocatively only to retain what I think is some playfulness on Plato's part. Clearly, in the present context, this word means something like

There are numerous elements of comedy and parody in these two εἰκόνες that have gone largely unrecognized in the scholarship on this scene⁶⁰⁹ and that can be brought to bear on our interpretation of the *Metamorphoses*. In addition to incorporating features from Socrates' preceding speech, such as the transcendent mode of viewing – characterized by the verbs such as καθορᾶν and θεᾶσθαι – and the attendant religious marvel (θαυμάζειν), Alcibiades describes Socrates' transformation as a metamorphosis from images into statues. It should not be lost on readers that this marvelous individual changes from one mode of representation – an εἰκὼν – to a different kind of representation – an ἄγαλμα. It is true that the ἄγαλμα has religious significance, but nevertheless, it is still a representation that serves as an intermediary between humans and the divine.⁶¹⁰ Even the medium of Socrates, through whose visage and voice we

“unaccompanied by music”; but, at the end of Alcibiades' speech, Socrates' words too are dressed up in a ridiculous outer covering, which, when it is stripped away, reveals the truth behind them. So, Socrates speaks in “naked” words, but indeed, ones that require the listener to strip them of their external covering to experience the mystifying truth behind them. We may also recall here the description ἕτερος λόγος gives of *ekphrasis* in Lucian's *de Domo*: ψιλὴ γάρ τις ἢ γραφὴ τῶν λόγων (see again chapter 2, p. 129-30).

⁶⁰⁸ θαυμαστός occurs often in Alcibiades' speech (213e2, 215b8, 217a1, 219c1, 220a4, 220c6, 221c3, and 222e8). In light of this, Blondell 2006, 178 concludes: “The adjective θαυμαστός, ‘amazing’, is a leitmotif in Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates. His baffled amazement is foreshadowed in an apparently innocent usage early in the dialogue, when Aristodemus answers Agathon's opening question, ‘Where is Socrates?’ (174e12), with the word θαυμάζω: ‘I too wonder where he can be’ (171a1-2). Unlike Aristodemus, we are not in a position to send a slave to find Socrates for us. Consequently we are obliged to live with our wondering. And that, of course, is the beginning of philosophy”.

⁶⁰⁹ The scholarship on this scene is too massive to summarize fully in a footnote. Some early interpreters saw Alcibiades' description of Socrates as a fulfillment of the terms of erotic love set out by Diotima (see, e.g., Bury 1932). However, more recently, interpreters have wavered between strict parody (i.e., Alcibiades' speech undercuts the idealized vision) and “serio-comedy” (i.e., the spectacle of Socrates still offers didaxis, despite his failure to teach Alcibiades). One of the elements that makes scholars find something serious behind the comedy is the comparison between Alcibiades' out-of-control sexual-appetite and Socrates' “self-sufficiency” (see Nussbaum 1986 for an early proponent of this view). For a sampling of opinions on this scene, see Gold 1980; Clay 1975; Nussbaum 1986; Sheffield 2001; Sheffield 2006; Usher 2002; Hunter 2004; Hunter 2012; Blondell 2002; Blondell 2006; Boyarin 2009; Nightingale 1995; Nightingale 2004; Corrigan and Glazov-Corrigan 2004; Scott and Welton 2008.

⁶¹⁰ On the religious elements of the ἄγαλμα in archaic Greek thought, see Steiner 2001 and Prier 1989. On Plato's appropriation of the ἄγαλμα for his philosophical metaphors, see Neer 2010 and Nightingale 2004.

viewers/listeners experience a kind of divine marvel, can be nothing more than a representational medium.

Even more strangely, though, it is not only Socrates himself who must be stripped of his “external hide”, but his words, too, are all covered up in a deceptively comic and absurd *δορά*. At the opening of his encomium, Alcibiades explains his second *εἰκών* by framing Socrates’ words in the language of “charm” (*κηλεῖν*) and seduction. What makes Socrates even “more marvelous” (*πολύ γε θαυμασιώτερος*) than Marsyas is the fact that he brings about the same bewitching effects on his hearers, but “without instruments” (*ἄνευ ὀργάνων*); that is, Socrates leaves “astounded and entranced” (*ἐκπεπληγμένοι ἐσμέν καὶ κατεχόμεθα*) anyone who listens to him or his words (*σοῦ τις ἀκούη ἢ τῶν σῶν λόγων*) and anyone who “lends his or her ears” (*εἰ ἐθέλοιμι παρέχειν τὰ ὦτα*) to him. This description represents a brilliant mixture of parodic and serious elements: whereas the language of “charm” (*κηλεῖν*) in Plato is primarily reserved for dangerous “alien voices” that lull listeners to sleep through mental indolence,⁶¹¹ the reaction of stupefaction and possession is reminiscent of the idealized lover in the *Phaedrus* gazing upon the beauty of the beloved.⁶¹² Thus, in the former respect, Socrates and his bewitching words exist on the same plane as the threatening Sirens – a fact that Alcibiades highlights by saying he plugs his ears and runs away from Socrates “as if from the Sirens” (*ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν Σειρήνων ἐπισχόμενος τὰ ὦτα οἴχομαι φεύγων*) for fear of growing old beside him; but in

⁶¹¹ See, e.g., the comparison between Protagoras and Orpheus at *Protagoras* 315a8; Cf. Socrates’ myth of the cicadas in the *Phaedrus* (*Phaedr.* 259a3), which threaten to charm Phaedrus and Socrates and lull them to sleep like the Sirens; and more generally, *mimesis* in Plato has the threat of charming listeners (see, e.g., *Rep.* 607c7).

⁶¹² Cf. *Phaedr.* 250a6, where the lover is *ἐκπλήττονται καὶ οὐκέτ’ ἐν αὐτῶν γίγνονται*. While the formula is not exactly the same, the language of possession is used elsewhere in the *Phaedran* description of *μανία* and is closely related to the phenomenon of being outside oneself in the Platonic framework. See Graverini 2010 for a discussion of how novels bring about the same bewitching effect.

the latter depiction, Socrates also reminds the careful reader of the ἐρώμενος of the *Phaedrus*, seeing that he not only represents a divine statue, or an ἄγαλμα,⁶¹³ but also inspires a transcendent μανία in his listeners.⁶¹⁴ Poised somewhere between dangerous enchantment and transcendent encounter, Socrates' words must be stripped of their deceptive appearances in order for the listener to experience the true benefit, or *utilitas*; thus, at 221d9ff., Alcibiades emends his earlier picture of Socrates as Marsyas, by adding:

καὶ γὰρ οὖν καὶ τοῦτο ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις παρέλιπον, ὅτι καὶ οἱ λόγοι αὐτοῦ ὁμοιότατοί εἰσι τοῖς σιληνοῖς τοῖς διοιγομένοις. εἰ γὰρ ἐθέλοι τις τῶν Σωκράτους ἀκούειν λόγων, φανεῖεν ἂν πάννυ γελοῖοι τὸ πρῶτον: τοιαῦτα καὶ ὀνόματα καὶ ῥήματα ἐξώθεν περιαμπέχονται, σατύρου δὴ τινα ὑβριστοῦ δοράν. ὄνους γὰρ κανθηλίους λέγει καὶ χαλκέας τινὰς καὶ σκυτοτόμους καὶ βυρσοδέψας, καὶ ἀεὶ διὰ τῶν αὐτῶν τὰ αὐτὰ φαίνεται λέγειν, ὥστε ἄπειρος καὶ ἀνόητος ἄνθρωπος πᾶς ἂν τῶν λόγων καταγελάσειεν. διοιγομένους δὲ ἰδὼν ἂν τις καὶ ἐντὸς αὐτῶν γιγνώμενος πρῶτον μὲν νοῦν ἔχοντας ἔνδον μόνους εὐρήσει τῶν λόγων, ἔπειτα θειοτάτους καὶ πλεῖστα ἀγάλματ' ἀρετῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἔχοντας...

For there is a point I left out in the beginning – namely that his talk most of all resembles the Silenuses that are opened up. Should one be willing to listen to Socrates' speeches, they would appear at first glance very ridiculous; on the outside they are dressed up with such absurd words and phrases – as if with the hide of a hubristic satyr. Indeed, he talks of donkeys, pack-asses, smiths, cobblers, and tanners; and he seems always to make the same points through the same words with the result that anyone inexperienced and thoughtless might laugh at his speeches. But, when you open them up and take a look, getting inside of them, first you will discover that they are the only speeches that make sense; and second, that none are so divine and so full of images of virtue...

Socrates' phrases and words are clothed (περιαμπέχεσθαι), as it were, in the “hide of a satyr” (σατύρου δὴ τινα ὑβριστοῦ δοράν), which is a “laughable” (γελοῖος) thing on the outside; in fact, the first items in the list of Socrates' topics of conversation are donkeys

⁶¹³ Cf. *Phaedr.* 251a6 and 252d7.

⁶¹⁴ We may compare once again the conclusion of *Alcibiades I*, where Socrates hopes to “give birth” to a “winged love” in Alcibiades: ὦ γενναῖε, πελαργοῦ ἄρα ὁ ἐμὸς ἔρως οὐδὲν διοίσει, εἰ παρὰ σοὶ ἐννεοττεύσας **ἔρωτα ὑπόπτερον** ὑπὸ τούτου πάλιν θεραπεύσεται (*Alc. I* 135e1-2).

(ὄνοι) and pack-asses (κανθήλαιοι), under the hides of which Socrates conceals divine sentiments (θειότατοι) that hold within them “images of virtue” (ἀγάλματ’ ἀρετῆς). Socrates’ words, however, only seem laughable to the “inexperienced and thoughtless man” (ἄπειρος καὶ ἀνόητος ἄνθρωπος); for the one who opens them up – who sees them for what they are and “gets inside of them” (ἐντὸς αὐτῶν γιγνόμενος) – Socrates’ λόγοι teach virtue, or more precisely, train the viewer/listener to become a κάλος καγαθος, which is the consummate ideal of virtue in Athenian education.⁶¹⁵ Alcibiades thus sets the terms for a mode of viewing/reading that is different for different viewers: just as Plutarch distinguished the “serious”, Simonidean bee reader from the one who only looks for pleasure from the experience, Alcibiades describes the effect Socrates has on his audience in opposite terms for the “inexperienced and senseless” and the one who sees behind the surface. “Getting inside” of Socrates’ λόγοι requires a philosophical kind of viewing – of the type we saw with *inspicere* above – that penetrates the simple exterior or surface-level meaning of the words. This further explication of the εἰκὼν of Socrates conveniently brings together a number of threads explored in this dissertation. The type of seeing Alcibiades advocates here is one that strips away the external veils and obscuring features of physical reality and gets at the core substance beneath, “without any of the mortal nonsense” (φλυαρίας θνητῆς), as Diotima says. Here we encounter the distinction between aesthetic and utilitarian modes of viewing. In this case, though, the essence of Socrates’ words, much like the man himself, represent a didactic call to virtue (cf. chapter 1), a fixed, immobilized statue (cf. chapter 2), and a stupefying and

⁶¹⁵ Interestingly, Socrates’ failure to teach Alcibiades is a reason why many scholars assume that this scene represents yet another *Apology* of Socrates (see, e.g., Scott and Welton 2008, 155-66 and Hunter 2004, 101-5).

transformative beloved (cf. chapter 3). It is the dual process of “looking” and “listening”, the synaesthetic encounter, that offers the symposiast as well as the reader access to the bewildering spectacle of Socrates.

With this passage, however, we also encounter the hermeneutic problems implicit in the dialogue form. The attempt at a σπουδογέλοιον pedagogy is emphasized, and the possibility of something σπουδαῖος or *utile* hiding beneath the comic and charming exterior is brought to the fore. There are two elements of parody worth exploring before we finally turn back to the Prologue of the *Met.* The first can be seen in Alcibiades’ εἰκόνες themselves. If we reconsider what we know about the hybrid nature of the satyr from the material record, we can see an extra layer of irony in the claim that Socrates is similar to one of these. We know from depictions of the satyr in antiquity that it was a bi-form creature – a mixture of human on top and ass on the bottom.⁶¹⁶ In addition to the lower donkey half, in many of the artistic renderings, the satyr has animal ears and is “disproportionately ithyphallic”.⁶¹⁷ In a sense, a satyr on the outside with otherworldly depths inside is a perfect icon for the ἐρώμενος-Socrates because it brings us back to the Typhonic question we encounter in the *Phaedrus* – namely, whether or not one’s soul is multiform and beastly.⁶¹⁸ Moreover, if we consider the lascivious and hyper-sexualized

⁶¹⁶ At least in Plato’s time, the hybrid satyr was composed of human and ass (see Lissarrague 1990; Hoffmann 1983; Hoffmann 1997; Padgett 2000; Hedreen 1992; Griffith 2006). It seems to be a Roman conflation that the satyr could also be half-man/half-goat, based on analogy to Pan (see, e.g., Shaw 2014, 4 n. 17). A transitional moment for this may be the well-known Slipper-Slapper Aphrodite (100 BCE), which could represent a turning point in depiction of satyrs as well and could explain later conflation. However, to my point, Plato only knew of the half-man/half-ass satyr, and Apuleius, one would imagine, also knew of the artistic convention. Indeed, as I will argue shortly, the continual reference to Lucius’ excessively large phallus may be alluding to the ithyphallic representations of the ass-satyrs in Classical depictions (see Lissarrague 1990b).

⁶¹⁷ See Lissarrague 1990a for an excellent discussion of the sexual side of satyrs.

⁶¹⁸ See Morgan 2012 for the “Typhonic question” in the *Phaedrus*. Cf. Hunter 1997 for the Platonic image of Typhon in Longus and Winkle 2011 for the “Typhonic choice” in Apuleius.

depictions of satyrs – sometimes in pursuit of a maiden or bacchant, at other times in the act of copulating with an animal – then it is a powerful parody indeed to liken Socrates to this licentious, theriomorphic creature, since in reality, he remains chaste and in pursuit of virtue and a divine vision.⁶¹⁹

The second and perhaps more apposite parodic element is the question of Homeric role-playing: that is, who is the real Odysseus, or we may even ask, who is the better Odysseus? Socrates, it has long been recognized,⁶²⁰ is portrayed here not only as an Odysseus *redivivus*, but also as an upgraded model, an Odysseus 2.0. Whereas Odysseus represented the quintessential journeyer in archaic thought – a man in search of his home and a model of nostalgia⁶²¹ – Plato introduces us in the *Symposium* to a new traveler, one who does not travel the geography of this world, but has instead traipsed the realms of the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος.⁶²² Just as Odysseus chooses a more Socratic life at the conclusion of the Myth of Er in *Republic* 10, so also, Socrates outdoes Odysseus in journeying in the *Symposium*. Thereby, Plato authorizes comparisons between the journeying hero of epic and the pilgrim philosophical model of dialogue. However, Alcibiades, too, has elements of Odysseus in him, especially considering that this dramatic moment directly precedes his own exile from home. This is certainly how he was interpreted in later antiquity, with Plutarch claiming that he was “of variegated fortunes” (τύχαις πολυτρόποις) and that he

⁶¹⁹ To take the irony even further, Usher 2002 compares this scene with the rape scene of Euripides’ *Cyclops*, which reverses the roles of Polyphemus and Silenus. That is, the satyr is normally the pursuer rather than the pursued, and Usher suggests that Plato is alluding, at least in part, to this moment from the *Cyclops*.

⁶²⁰ See Blondell 2002; Blondell 2006; Hunter 2004; Hunter 2012; Montiglio 2005.

⁶²¹ On nostalgia in the *Odyssey* and its afterlife in Roman poetry, see Munich 2003.

⁶²² For Apuleius’ conception of philosophy as a version of ‘mind-traveling’, see *Apol.* 64 and *de Mundo* praef. 1. On the preface of the *de Mundo* and the ‘flight of Philosophy,’ see the analysis of Fletcher 2014.

“displayed many metamorphoses” (μεταβολὰς ἐπεδείξατο).⁶²³ If Socrates charms his listeners with the promise of (self)-knowledge into a kind of subdued inactivity, then Alcibiades’ choice to run from him is framed as an effort to get back home. The uncomfortable placeless-ness (ἀτοπία) of the philosophical journey leaves the traveler homeless; but Alcibiades, who later becomes homeless – like Odysseus, a man without a country – does not want to undertake the journey to the ὑπερουράνιος τόπος.

Thus, in these two εἰκόνες with their complex play on visual and aural phenomena, Plato brings together a number of parodic elements that, I suggest, Apuleius recognized and recreated in the character of Lucius. The misconstrual of the ideal ἐραστής/ἐρώμενος relationship, the misinterpretation of erotic and transcendent gazing, the failure to learn the useful lesson due to an excessive fascination with charm, and the stupefaction from marvel that does not lead anywhere all illuminate how one failed student of Socrates did not get the point. In other words, within the Platonic corpus there is a use of σπουδογέλοιοι satire to show in a playful context exactly how far certain modes of viewing (or interpretation) lead us into the weeds. Alcibiades, who was known in later antiquity to be someone who “played and was serious at the same time” (παίζων ἅμα καὶ σπουδάζων),⁶²⁴ teaches us that Socrates is an allegory to be deciphered; and yet, after Alcibiades opens him up, he still fails to remain serious. In offering the sublime speech of Socrates and then the corresponding encomium of the Socratic spectacle, Plato

⁶²³ See the description in *Alcib.* 2: τὸ δ’ ἦθος αὐτοῦ πολλὰς μὲν ὕστερον, ὡς εἰκὸς ἐν πράγμασι μεγάλοις καὶ τύχαις πολυτρόποις, ἀνομοιότητος πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ μεταβολὰς ἐπεδείξατο. φύσει δὲ πολλῶν ὄντων καὶ μεγάλων παθῶν ἐν αὐτῷ, τὸ φιλόνηκον ἰσχυρότατον ἦν καὶ τὸ φιλόπρωτον, ὡς δῆλόν ἐστι τοῖς παιδικοῖς ἀπομνημονεύμασιν.

⁶²⁴ See Plutarch’s *Alcibiades* 2.7, where interestingly, Alcibiades is said to be half joking and half serious in his refusal to play the αὐλός, on the grounds that the flute makes a man unrecognizable even to his kinsmen. For that reason, Alcibiades concludes, the Athenians (i.e., Athena) played the hubristic αὐλητής.

compels his readers to make a choice as to how they will look upon the mirror of Socrates. Or to phrase it differently, he forces us to decide whether we want to follow the Homeric Odysseus or the Platonic Socrates. We already saw in chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation how Lucius, too, fails to see himself in the mirror: the opportunity for acquiring self-knowledge and transcendent experience is presented to him not only in the mirroring water of Byrrhena's atrium, but also in the *Haarspiegel* of an ἐρώμενος figure, a comic variant on the 'face of the other' tradition from the *Phaedrus* and *Alcibiades I*. But this opportunity, though available through the various *specula* he encounters, escapes the notice of Lucius who instead takes delight in his own delusions. In the section that follows, we will see how the Prologue forces retrospective readers to make a choice in their mode of viewing/reading – whether pleasurable or serious – and in the object of their gaze – i.e., Odysseus or Socrates. In light of what I argue is a complex allusion to the “mirror of Socrates”, we are invited to compare Lucius, the narrator, and ourselves to Alcibiades eulogizing Socrates. The implied question it asks, in turn, is what kind of viewing we would like to experience in the mirror of this character, as we gaze upon *figurae* transformed into *imagines*.

3. Back to the Prologue: the εἰκόνες of Lucius:

The figure of Socrates and the status of Socratic features have already been understood as important elements of self-fashioning in the Second Sophistic. As Paul Zanker demonstrated in his 1991 Sather Lectures, the traits of the intellectual in the 1st and 2nd centuries were very often modeled after the various descriptions of the hideous

looking father of philosophy, whose bald head and asinine features became exemplary traits for later members of the cultured elite to mimic and adopt.⁶²⁵ In the scholarship on Apuleius as well, the resemblance between Socrates and the character of Lucius has not gone unnoticed. The Socrates we encounter soon after the Prologue of the *Metamorphoses* could be said to represent a kind of fan-fiction version of the Platonic Socrates, and it has been recognized that Aristomenes' tale provides a *mise-en-abyme* of the rest of the novel and shows to Lucius an exemplary model, which could offer "ethical therapy by deterrence" (cf. Terence's *speculum* of other men's lives).⁶²⁶ But in addition to the thematic resemblance between Lucius-the-character and Apuleius' Socrates, the bald head and asinine features of both the Platonic and Xenophontic Socrates have also been considered one of the most important lenses through which to interpret Lucius' prominent bald head at the end of the novel. Winkler, in his characteristic mode of introducing (rather than solving) hermeneutic problems, opens the question about the symbolic value of Lucius' baldness; but as we saw in the previous chapter, he offers a fairly reductionist reading, developing his "aporetic" juxtaposition between "serious" and "satirical" by emphasizing that baldness would likely conjure up one of two images in the reader: religious devotee or mime actor (and therefore, clownish buffoon).⁶²⁷ In an updated interpretation, Dowden, James, and O'Brien – three interpreters more prone to see genuine Platonism in the novel – have all suggested a loose association between the

⁶²⁵ See Zanker 1995 for the seminal treatment of this, particularly in portraiture.

⁶²⁶ For the phrase, see Zadorojnyi 2010, 172 (cf. chapter 1, 62 n. 150) who is discussing the role of exemplarity in Plutarch's mirrors. For a very good discussion of the role of Apuleius' Socrates as a model for Lucius, see Keulen 2003.

⁶²⁷ See Winkler 1985, 224-7.

picture of Lucius, parading his bald head around Rome, and the portrait of the famously hideous intellectual⁶²⁸; but they go no further than to point out similarities.

Egelhaaf-Gaiser has recently posited a more specific reference point to Lucius' baldness by comparing it simultaneously to the symbolic bald pate of Aesop (*vita Aesopi* G87-88)⁶²⁹ and the Silenic-Socrates at the end of the *Symposium*. She suggests (rightly, to my mind) that, by emphasizing Lucius' baldness at the end, Apuleius alludes primarily to the "satyr play" of Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates, which offers a burlesque but serious depiction of the philosopher.⁶³⁰ But her argument depends very much on the work of Luca Graverini, who has provided a more nuanced reading of the Silenic-Socrates as a resonant model for Lucius throughout the *Metamorphoses*. In this excellent analysis, Graverini compares the two well-known physical descriptions of Socrates from the 4th century – i.e., the Silenus-satyr description from Plato's *Symposium* and the asinine likeness depiction in Xenophon's *Symposium* – to the elaborate narration of the asinine metamorphosis of Lucius in *Met.* 3.24; there, his ears "grow immoderately long", his lips "hang down" (*pendulae*), and his nostrils "gape" (*hiantes*), all described in precisely the same way as Socrates' features.⁶³¹ By doing so, Graverini provides us with a useful frame for considering Lucius as a kind of reincarnated Socrates, stripping him of his external features, just as Alcibiades does to Socrates in the *Symposium*, and revealing a likeness to Socrates within. In the end, Graverini uses this to argue for the inherent σπουδογέλοιον, or "serio-comic" nature of Apuleius' text. And indeed, in this regard, I am inclined to

⁶²⁸ See Dowden 2006; O'Brien and James 2006.

⁶²⁹ It should be noted that Winkler 1985, 287 was the first to point out the similarities between Aesop's symbolic baldness and Lucius'.

⁶³⁰ See Egelhaaf-Gaiser 2012.

⁶³¹ See Graverini 2012, 118-131; see pp. 122ff. in particular for what follows.

side with his refreshing move away from Winklerian hermeneutics. However, I disagree with him primarily on the purpose of the allusion, and in what follows, I will show that it is not only in the transformation scene that we find allusions to Socrates, but the “satiric” figure is foregrounded in the metamorphic images – the *figurae* transforming into *imagines* – found already in the Prologue. Rather than arguing that the Prologue functions programmatically as a generic statement about novelistic literature, as Graverini suggests, I propose that Apuleius compels the reader, just as Plato does, to make a choice about what type of character s/he wants to see and what mode of reading/viewing s/he would like to employ; in this way, he re-enacts his Platonic antecedent.

Let us turn back to the opening of the *Met.* and consider the common elements that it shares with the “satyr drama” of the *Symposium*. I have argued up to this point that the figure of Socrates, as eulogized by Alcibiades, replaces not only the Homeric spectacle – the θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι – but more specifically, the spectacle of the Homeric Odysseus, who morphs on a number of occasions and provides a θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι to his viewers.⁶³² It has already been recognized in the scholarship on the *Symposium* that one of Plato’s apparent goals in this scene is to replace the Homeric hero with a more philosophical version.⁶³³ I set out to demonstrate above, furthermore, how the verb *inspicere* in the Prologue of the *Met.* invites readers to a deeper kind of reading – a philosophical viewing of the sort that strips away the external features of the text to look beneath the surface level. When we thus put these two features together, the request to “look in” in order to “marvel” seems to hover somewhere between the archaic marvel of

⁶³² See Buxton 2009, 29-48 on astonishment in the *Odyssey*, and in particular, p. 42-44 for Odysseus as a θαῦμα for viewers.

⁶³³ See n. 620 above.

Homeric viewing – the tradition of θαύματα ἰδέσθαι – and the Platonic appropriation of this tradition, which puts on display a more philosophical version of the wondrous hero. Unlike the viewers of Odysseus, who remain on the surface level when they marvel at his metamorphosis from the ugly and shabby stranger into the beautiful hero, Alcibiades and the viewers/listeners at the symposium bring about a metamorphosis of the εἰκόνες of Socrates by opening him up to see the statues within. That is, Socrates transforms from one mode of representation, εἰκόνες, into another, ἀγάλματα, the second of which acts as an intermediary between humans and the divine. And the primary phenomenological experience of watching is “marvel” and “stupefaction” – simultaneously a fulfillment of and a parody on the sublime speech of Diotima. Similarly in the Prologue, the readers are asked to employ this type of philosophical viewing in order to experience astonishment at a series of metamorphoses – that is, transformations from one mode of representation, *figurae*, into another, *imagines*. The fact that Lucius’ metamorphosis from one mimetic medium to another travels the opposite journey from Socrates’ only adds to the γέλοιον element of the allusion. However, just as Alcibiades’ speech, on the surface level, is primarily meant to incite laughter through the “satiric” appropriation of Socrates’ sublime speech, so also, the foreshadowing of pleasurable metamorphic *figurae* and *fortuna*e may have something hidden beneath the otherwise ridiculous surface.

Of course, the story is never so simple with Apuleius’ hermeneutic games, and Lucius’ role as an ‘anti-Socrates’ is recast as a version of the actual Socrates by the end of the novel. No doubt, he is the reverse of Socrates at the beginning: he is beautiful on the outside in accordance with the masculine ideal of the time, as Byrrhena describes him

in book 2⁶³⁴; and when we open him up, we encounter the philosophizing ass within (see 10.33: *philosophans asinus*). Moreover, in perhaps the most humorous appropriation, Lucius does become disproportionately ithyphallic, like a satyr, as we learn from his continual mention of the growth of his “nature” as his only consolation for his metamorphosis.⁶³⁵ However, this is only Lucius’ first transformation, and he undergoes a second transformation in book 11, one that could be said to uncover ἀγάλματα θεῶν. That is, as the retrospective reader knows, in the formal, public initiation, Lucius is stripped of his ass-hide (*corium*; = δορά)⁶³⁶ and placed on a pedestal, elaborately decorated and garlanded on his head. And his conversion, as described by Mithras, does seem to be framed in terms that we could relate, ironically, to both Alcibiades and Odysseus: Mithras explains that Lucius was a beautiful, talented, and educated youth who slipped into servile pleasures at the precarious point of a man’s age.⁶³⁷ Moreover, the external ass hide – the *corium* – after it is stripped off by the grace of the goddess, is replaced by a

⁶³⁴ See Byrrhena’s description at 2.2, in which she divines Lucius’ *probitas* from his external features: ‘*En*’ inquit ‘*Sanctissimae Salviae matris generosa probitas. Sed et cetera corporis execrabiliter ad regulam sunt congruentia: inenormis proceritas, succulenta gracilitas, rubor temperatus, flavum et inaffectedatum capillitium, oculi caesii quidem sed vigiles et in aspectu micantes, prorsus aquilini, os quoquoersum floridum, speciosus et immeditatus incessus.*’ O’Brien 2002, 40-4 uses this as her primary evidence that Lucius is an ‘anti-Socrates’. On the physiognomic discussions of character and Lucius’ fulfillment of them, see again Keulen 2006. If we think back to the superficial viewing (*adspicere*) that the Socrates of Apuleius’ *de Platone* employs when he sees Plato, it is interesting that he is able to divine his “internal character” (*ingenium...intimum*) from his external appearance. One may say that Lucius is also a kind of anti-Plato, in as much as he is beautiful on the outside but lacks the internal character. Another interesting point of comparison between these two figures, as Richard Fletcher points out, is that both undergo a conversion, which leads to a journey (see Fletcher 2014). But, Lucius’ conversion happens after his journey.

⁶³⁵ See, e.g., *Met.* 3.25: *Nec ullum miserae reformationis video solacium, nisi quod mihi iam nequeunti tenere Photidem natura crescebat.* Cf. also *Met.* 10.22.

⁶³⁶ See TLL.GLOSS for *corium*. Cf. *Flor.* 3, where Marsyas’ satyr-skin is described as a *corium*.

⁶³⁷ See *Met.* 11.15: *nec tibi natales ac ne dignitas quidem, vel ipsa qua flores usquam doctrina profuit, sed lubrico virentis aetatulae ad serviles delapsus voluptates, curiositatis improsperae sinistrum praemium reportasti.* Elsewhere, I have written about how this moment in the *Metamorphoses* may be an allusion to the conclusion of the Myth of Er, where Odysseus converts into a Socratic figure. Indeed, I think the question of whether Lucius is an ‘Odysseus-turned-Socrates’ or whether he is a ‘Socrates-turned-Odysseus’ is always at play.

simulacrum. As the Groningen commentators point out, when Lucius is retransformed into a statue in book 11, the iconography of his spectacular dress and crown is reminiscent of both Helios and Apollo, and the language of the scene recalls Apuleius' presentation of Apollo in the contest of Apollo and Marsyas in *Florida* 3.⁶³⁸ Moreover, the fact that he stands next to Isis could add a third resonance, in which Lucius appears to be Osiris standing beside his wife.⁶³⁹ If Egelhaaf-Gaiser is right that Lucius' bald head alludes to the end of the *Symposium*, then at the conclusion of the novel, he has been stripped of his multiple "hides" – his beautiful external appearance and his inner ass – only to reveal a simultaneous spectacle of *simulacra deorum* and the absurd looking Silenic-Socrates. The second reader, when he or she encounters the Prologue's promise of a θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι that comprises the transformation of *figurae* into *imagines*, is thus invited to recall the metamorphic εἰκόνες of Socrates, whose garlanded bald head and half-ass/half-human exterior must be opened up for viewers and listeners to see the divine.

Before we assess what we may be meant to learn from such a complex and spectacular allusion to the metamorphic and mirroring θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι of Socrates, I would like to dwell briefly on the advantages my new reading offers to the study of the Prologue and the novel as a whole. If I am correct about the dense allusion in the opening words of the novel, a number of interpretive "conundrums" can be seen merely as threads that help to weave together the allusive tapestry. First of all, the synaesthetic nature of the opening, located somewhere between oral telling and stories written down for reading –

⁶³⁸ See *GCA* 2015, pp. 404-406. Cf. Finkelpearl 2009.

⁶³⁹ I must thank Luca Graverini for pointing this possible association out to me.

what Don Fowler has referred to as *fingierte Mündlichkeit*⁶⁴⁰ – can be explained as the set up for the allusion to the visual-aural spectacle of Socrates. In other words, the synaesthetic experience this text promises reproduces the multi-sensory encounter with Socrates: in Alcibiades’ encomium, Socrates is introduced as a visual spectacle of marvel – a “marvelous head” (ταυτηνὶ τὴν θαυμαστὴν κεφαλὴν) to look upon which transforms into a holy statue (ἄγαλμα); but, the εἰκὼν of Socrates only makes sense if it is expanded to cover the realm of aural experience as well. Alcibiades resorts to the “image” of Marsyas because of his ability to “charm” (κηλεῖν) his listeners with the pipes. The bewitching naked words (ψιλοὶ λόγοι) by means of which Socrates captivates “anyone who furnishes his or her ears to him” (cf. ἐπειδὴν δὲ σοῦ τις ἀκούῃ; παρέχειν τὰ ὦτα) corresponds nicely to the “pleasurable whisper” (*lepidus susurrus*) with which the narrating *ego* of the Prologue promises to “tickle our ears” (*ures permulcere*). Though Plato generally reserves the verb κηλεῖν for dangerously charming and bewitching phenomena (e.g., poetry, rhetoric, etc.),⁶⁴¹ in this parasitically parodic appropriation of Socrates’ transcendent speech, Alcibiades turns Plato’s own language against Socrates. And Apuleius, picking up on the ambivalence of Socratic/Platonic rhetoric,⁶⁴² puts in the

⁶⁴⁰ See Fowler 2001.

⁶⁴¹ Cf. the assessment of Kirichenko 2008, who attempts to connect the “charm” of the Prologue to deceptive *mimesis* in the Republic; he suggests, moreover, that this opening line alludes only to the *Phaedrus* (following Trapp 2001), but that it accentuates the written nature of the text in an anti-Platonic move. However, what he and others fail to take into account is the fact that Socrates himself is painted with the same brush with which Plato paints poetry and *mimesis*, for which reason the hermeneutic value of adopting a strict doctrinal approach to Plato has recently been called into question (see, e.g., Ferrari 1987 on the *Phaedrus*; Morgan 2000; Nightingale 1995; Boyarin 2009). Moreover, to consider writing an “anti-Platonic” move overlooks the fact that the *Schriftkritik* itself is another instance of Plato parodying himself – which is the reason why it has long bothered scholars of Plato. See, e.g., the rather extreme solution of the Tübingen school of Plato, which posits an “esoteric doctrine” hidden beneath the dialogues.

⁶⁴² We may cite as evidence for Apuleius’ recognition of the ambivalence of Platonic rhetoric the opening of the *de Platone*, in which Apuleius tells a likely apocryphal story about Socrates’ first encounter with Plato. Socrates tells his followers about a dream he had, in which a swan flew from the altar of Cupid into his lap;

mouth of the narrator the promise of a similar “charm”.⁶⁴³ Furthermore, the synaesthesia follows the same reasoning of Alcibiades’ encomium, but in a reverse order: the narrator claims he will “charm” our ears provided that we “look into” his text; that is, if we direct our gaze to where the narrator points, we will have our ears charmed. Just as Alcibiades directs the symposiasts toward metamorphic εἰκόνες – “that marvelous head” (ταυτηνὶ τὴν θαυμαστὴν κεφαλὴν; note the deictic) – which transform, in turn, into ἀγάλματα θεῶν after we open them up and look inside, the narrating *ego* of the Prologue uses a deictic cue – “provided that you’re willing to look into the text” – to direct our gaze to the transformation (*conversae*) of *figurae* into *imagines*.

The second conundrum that the allusion solves is the dialogic opening words, *at ego tibi*, which open the novel *in medias res*, as it were, and for which readers have struggled to find a Greek antecedent.⁶⁴⁴ One of the reasons these first words of the text

and then, upon flying away, he sang a song that “charmed the ears of men and of gods”. This swan turns out to be Plato, of course, which demonstrates how for Apuleius, Platonic rhetoric possesses its own dangerous charm. See the general solution of Fletcher 2014, who sees Apuleius’ Platonism as an “aestheticized impersonation of philosophy”, as evidenced by the divide between *ratio* and *oratio* in the *de Platone*. Cf. Fowler (forthcoming) *ad loc.* ‘charming the ears’: *auditus...mulcens*; cf. *Metamorphoses* 1.1.2: *aturesque tuas...permulceam*. The verb is used by Ovid to mean “to enchant magically” (cf. *Metamorphoses* 1.716, *Fasti* 4.551); also used by Cicero to refer to enchanting with music or speech (cf. *On Oratory* 2.315). Apuleius may be playing with the divide between philosophy and sophistry while discussing the fanciful dream of Socrates”.

⁶⁴³ Scholars have long tried to find the appropriate corresponding Greek term for *permulcere*; the primary contenders at this point are (1) ἐπαρδειν, the charm that one must chant over oneself to avoid the harmful effects of poetry (see Schlam 1970), (2) θέλγειν, the enchantment of the Sirens and Odysseus, and storytelling in general (see Graverini 2012; Hunter 2012), or (3) κηλεῖν, the dangerous, bewitching words of poetry and *mimēsis* (see Kirichenko 2008, discussed in n. 641 above). In a fuller articulation of my position on this term in Apuleius, I might point out that the ambiguity of the term and the difficulty of anchoring it to a specific Greek concept is precisely the point. The novel makes us choose between different models of *mimesis* at the outset by using a verb that could translate important narrative concepts in both Plato and Homer.

⁶⁴⁴ See Leo 1905, 305: “incipit quasi ex medio colloquio”; cf. Helm 1931, vi.; Janson 1964, 114 n. 5; de Jong 2001, 201, who calls it a “dialogical monological discourse”; Graverini 2012 has suggested the prologue of Callimachus’ *Aitia* as a possible intertext; Scobie 1975, 66. See also the assessment of GCA 2007, 63 *ad loc.*: “perhaps...*at* is merely a colloquial particle...[and] the combination *at ego* is characteristic of dialogue and occurs very frequently in comedy, sometimes to emphasize a promise or proposal”.

bothered scholars, aside from the fact that they are unparalleled as an opening in Latin literature, is the underlying implication of a previous narrative exchange before the novel begins. As John Morgan notes,

In the very first sentence, the emphatic position of *At ego tibi* ('But I to you...') and *isto* ('that [style] of yours') implies a previous storytelling *tu mihi* ('you to me...'). It is not altogether obvious that the person the speaker addresses as 'you' is simply the reader. Rather we are plunged into the position of overhearing part of a larger narrative exchange already in progress.⁶⁴⁵

Moreover, as Irene de Jong points out, there seem to be three conversational partners here: the narrating 'I' (*ego*), the fictive addressee/reader (*tu*), and an anonymous third conversation-partner, to whom or about whom the question *quis ille?* is addressed.⁶⁴⁶

Indeed, de Jong, followed by Dowden, postulates that the *Symposium* provides a uniquely *à propos* model for the whole of book 1 of the *Metamorphoses*, considering the fact that Aristomenes' *fabula* (1.5-1.20) is already a retelling of a version already told.⁶⁴⁷ If we consider these narratological conundrums in light of the opening of Alcibiades speech, though, we encounter the exact, same dialogic situation. Alcibiades, who has drunkenly burst into this *Symposium* quite literally *in medias res*, assumes that a series of previous speeches and interactions have occurred and so, begins his own encomium as follows:

⁶⁴⁵ Morgan 2001, 161.

⁶⁴⁶ See de Jong 2001, 204-5: "Who are the participants in the 'conversation' of Apuleius' Prologue? I envisage a situation with three persons (as in the opening scene 2-20): an 'I' (the narrator/fictive author of the ensuing narrative/book), a 'you' (the narratee/fictive reader, the *lector* of the end of the Prologue), and an anonymous third person to whom the question *quis ille?* is addressed (if the addressee were the 'I,' it should have been *quis tu?*). What seems to happen in the Prologue is that the narrator, by way of reaction to something said by the 'you', announces that now he will tell a (particular type of) tale. At the moment he is about to start (*exordior*), he is 'interrupted' by the narratee asking a third person who he, the narrator, is". Cf. Drews 2006, who deals with this narratological problem by suggesting that there are, in fact, two Prologue speakers and the speaker actually changes – in what he labels a *Sprecherwechsel* – after the question *quis ille?*.

⁶⁴⁷ de Jong 2001 is the first to establish the narratological parallel with Platonic dialogue in general and with the *Symposium* in particular. Cf. Dowden 2006, who even goes so far as to compare the names Aristomenes and Aristodemos, suggesting that the similarity further elucidates the not so subtle allusion.

Σωκράτη δ' ἐγὼ ἐπαινέιν, ὧ ἄνδρες, οὕτως ἐπιχειρήσω, δι' εἰκόνων.

But I will attempt to praise Socrates, gentlemen, in the following way, namely through εἰκόνες.

If Alcibiades' speech represents an invitation to listeners (and readers) to reinterpret Socrates' sublime speech through the lens of a comic retelling, then this moment transforms "this marvelous head" (ταυτηνὴ τὴν θαυμαστὴν κεφαλὴν) of Socrates into a symbol of divine Eros and a commodity for visual consumption. Similarly, if I was right to suggest in the previous chapter that the concluding words of the novel send us back to the beginning for a Palinode, then this transitional opening of a speech in the *Symposium* may be a fitting model to adopt for our retrospective reading of the opening dialogic situation of the *Metamorphoses*. Just as the first lines of the *Metamorphoses* highlight the three conversational participants – a speaking subject (*at ego*), a listening audience (*tibi*), and a question *quis ille?* about a strange and marvelous third party – Alcibiades' speech opens with a similar relationship between speaker, audience, and a third character. That is, he plays the narrating 'I' (δ' ἐγὼ = *at ego*) addressing an audience and readers simultaneously (ὧ ἄνδρες; cf. *tibi*) about a strange and marvelous spectacle, "this marvelous head" of Socrates (ταυτηνὴ τὴν θαυμαστὴν κεφαλὴν...Σωκράτη; cf. *quis ille?*). The narrator, in turn, eulogizes this fascinating visual-aural spectacle through metamorphic εἰκόνες in order explain the experience of marvel one receives through looking and/or listening. And Aristodemus, in his narration of Alcibiades' encomium, retells a retelling of a speech that redefines Socrates as a parody of himself and as an Odysseus *redivivus*. It is no coincidence, then, that just after the Prologue, Aristomenes appears and retells a retelling of an anti-encomium, in which a fan-fiction Socrates shows

up as a parody of the Platonic Socrates and as an Odysseus *redivivus*.⁶⁴⁸ Indeed, the entire parody of Socrates, for the second reader of Aristomenes' tale, becomes a parody of the "serious" ending that he or she has encountered in book 11 in the very same way that Alcibiades' speech represents a satire of the original, idealized model of the speech of Socrates/Diotima.

In fact, in light of the opening allusion to the *Symposium*, even the troublesome question of who the narrator is – the question *quis ille?*, which we uncomfortably meet in the opening and which has long vexed interpreters of the *Metamorphoses*⁶⁴⁹ – begins to look like a question familiar from the *Symposium*, namely, "whose turn is it to speak?"⁶⁵⁰ And, depending on who the speaker is (e.g., a mock-Socrates or a mock-Alcibiades), the question we are compelled (unpleasantly) to confront is which version of ἔρως we hope to meet in the succeeding novel. Is it the πάνδημος Ἀφροδίτη of the many – which Alcibiades clearly pursues in his erotic games with Socrates – or is it the οὐράνια Ἀφροδίτη of Diotima's speech?

⁶⁴⁸ A fact that is highlighted explicitly – just in case the reader missed it – by Meroe's comparison of herself to Calypso, abandoned by Ulysses (*Met.* 1.12): *At ego scilicet Ulixi astu deserta vice Calypsonis aeternam solitudinem flebo*.

⁶⁴⁹ For a sampling of all the views on this, see the various essays from Kahane and Laird 2001, which all touch upon this question. Dowden 2001, for instance, enumerates at least 7 different prologue speakers: Aristides, Sisenna, a Plautine *prologus*, "a rhetorical voice making the transition from *exordium* (opening address) to *narratio* (telling)," Apuleius the author, Apuleius the newcomer to the literary stage, and the book itself. At the conference, the organizers decided to put the matter to a vote, and concluded democratically (12 in favor, 4 against, and 9 abstentions) that Lucius was the Prologue speaker.

⁶⁵⁰ For this reinterpretation of the troublesome *quis ille?*, I am inspired by Richard Fletcher's conclusion in his recent publication, *Apuleius' Platonism* (Fletcher 2014, 266-7): "...novelists do not merely ask their readers to expect, and to find, Platonic allegory and reference in these themes, but to understand how philosophising is at its very basic level a mode of fictionalisation. The question 'who speaks' (*quis ille?*, *Met.* 1.1), that is central to our understanding of the novel, now reads as a rephrasing of basic issues of impersonation at the heart of philosophical writing and identity". It should be noted, however, that I take this "impersonation" in a very different direction, in as much as all of the speakers in the *Symposium* are different "impersonators" of a sort.

Lastly, the false modesty of the narrator in describing himself as a *rudis locutor* – a facade that scholars up until now have largely seen as a mere *captatio benevolentiae* in accordance with the rhetorical conventions⁶⁵¹ – can now be framed as a kind of ass-talk similar to that of Socrates. What seems at first glance to be a claim about translation for a non-native speaker, and what Winkler read as yet another clue for the detective to decipher the coming metamorphosis – *rudis* being etymologically linked to the braying of the ass (*rudere*)⁶⁵² – can instead be seen as the ass-hide that covers the words of this tale: just as Socrates is always speaking of pack-asses but hides divine sentiments inside his words, there may be something for us behind the words of this philosophizing ass.

Since my own scrupulous readers may be thinking at this point, “this *rudis locutor* keeps saying that there is ‘something behind these words’ without specifying what”, it may be time for me to reveal my hand. I certainly would not endorse the notion that Apuleius hides Platonic doctrines beneath the ass-hide of the narrator’s words. Indeed, *contra* the Tübingen school on Plato and most modern scholars of Apuleius’ Platonism, I would not even admit that Plato did such a thing. Nor would I align myself with the strictly ‘open’ reading of Winkler, who claims that the *auctor* of this tale *endorses* both the serious and the satirical (though, for Winkler, it seems to be mostly the satirical). We

⁶⁵¹ See, e.g., the recent commentary of May 2013, who refuses to see anything more to this generically rich Prologue (pp. 97-8 *ad loc.* ‘inexperienced speaker’): “...another *captatio benevolentiae* and falsely modest apology by the autodidact for his unusual language. In *Met.* 6.29.3 *rudis* is used again as a literary term, to describe a ‘simple story’ (*rudis...historia*), in a comically self-referential context about Lucius’ story becoming a novel”.

⁶⁵² See Winkler 1985, 196 for the pun. Graverini 2012, 7ff. points out the pun and connects it to the famous prologue of Callimachus’ *Aitia* (1.30-2), where he contrasts the braying of an ass to the fine whirring of the cicadas, and prefers the latter for his poetic program. According to Graverini, then, Apuleius is engaging with a kind of anti-Callimachean poetics. It should be noted, of course, that Callimachus himself was likely in dialogue with a kind of Platonic poetics, considering that the *Phaedrus* represents an Ur-text of sorts for the poetic image of the charming cicadas. Socrates, too, hovers somewhere between ass-braying, with his hide-covered words, and charming cicadas.

could call this tale a “choose your own adventure’ story”, where the philosophically minded and the pleasure seekers can both get something out of it. But I do not think that the philosophical lesson is the same one that Socrates and Phaedrus seek when they fight against the sleep-inducing Siren-cicadas; and I doubt that the mere pleasure seeker can entirely avoid confronting some nagging serious questions. If Alcibiades’ Socrates provides a mirror of self-knowledge of sorts, then what exactly is it we are meant to learn from Apuleius’ appropriation of this scene in the “mirror of the text”?

On the one hand, we could say that our involvement in Lucius’ journey, or rather, our participation in his voyeurism teaches us about ourselves. That is, we are given a chance to delight in illicit visual encounters at the safe distance of novelistic voyeurism and still experience a redemption together with Lucius when the priest of Isis declares that Lucius’ curiosity was used as a tool of Isis – what Christina Harrauer calls a *Heilsökonomie* in her unpublished commentary on book 11. If the Prologue (and succeeding novel) is framed simultaneously in the *Odyssey*-mirror tradition and the ‘mirror of Socrates’ parody of the *Odyssey*, then the text invites us to enjoy the *Odyssey* and at the same time imagine the sublime ἔπος of Diotima. This is tantamount not only to having one’s cake and eating it, but also finding out later that cake was perfectly healthy. In what could be considered an ancient version of Stanley Fish’s model for *Paradise Lost*,⁶⁵³ we partake in a bawdier *Odyssey*, packed full of adultery tales and seduction

⁶⁵³ As exemplified, e.g., at Fish 1967, 49: “*Paradise Lost* is a dialectical experience which has the advantage traditionally claimed for dialectic of involving the respondent in his edification. On one level at least the poem has the form of a Platonic dialogue, with the epic voice taking the role of Socrates, and the reader in the position of Phaedrus or Cratylus, continually forced to acknowledge his errors, and in this way moving toward a confirmation of the truth...” My version of this turns the narrating *ego* not only into a Socrates, but also into an Alcibiades or a Phaedrus, and we readers are compelled to hear the dialectic in the words themselves as well as in our response to them.

scenes; we are given a voyeuristic window into the lovemaking of this Odysseus and his Circes and Calypsos; but we end up seeing a reflection of ourselves in the frame, becoming our own critics, and concluding in redemption. This fits in well with some recent scholarship on novels in general,⁶⁵⁴ and it is most definitely one possible interpretation for the didactic value of dialectic in a Platonic dialogue. One could say, for instance, that Plato, too, invites readers to participate in the *Phaedrus* – to invest in Phaedrus’ speech endorsing the baser love, which is then authorized by Socrates’ first speech and condemned by his second. But, in the end, Socrates concludes that all of this was play anyway, and the reader safely returns home, having had serious seeds planted playfully. If Apuleius re-enacts the Platonic maneuver in the Prologue, as I have suggested, then he may invite the reader to a kind of dialectic encounter with this novel. In that case, the serious reader, flying about like the Simonidean bee and picking up useful sentiments, could recognize with critical judgment him- or herself staring through the “curious gaze” of Lucius; that is, he or she could experience a kind of “ethical therapy by deterrence”, as Aemilianus should have done vis-à-vis the mirror.

However, even if we do not imagine Apuleius to be such a sneaky moralist, disguising critical *ratio* with charming *oratio*, there is an alternative kind of lesson hiding behind these words. With the embedded choice between a serious and a pleasurable mode of reading working together with the serio-comic image of Socrates – itself a spectacle for viewers to take seriously or to take pleasure in – I would suggest that Apuleius is teaching us a new way to read Plato. It would be extremely beneficial for Apuleius scholarship if interpreters begin to ask with Friedemann Drews: “...why and in what

⁶⁵⁴ See, e.g., Whitmarsh 2002 on *ekphrasis* in Heliodorus.

sense does philosophy have to be ‘serious’?”⁶⁵⁵ In introducing Alcibiades into the feast and having him drunkenly parody Socrates’ speech, Plato authorizes parodies of Plato. Some scholars think that the depiction of Socrates represents a human approximation of the sublime heights of Diotima’s speech, and some argue that the picture of the satyric Socrates undercuts the Platonic ideal established in Socrates’ speech. But, most would agree that this ridiculous figure – poised somewhere between comedy and tragedy, between human and divine, and between lover and beloved – offers an alternative model of the pursuit of knowledge to Odysseus. I suggest that Apuleius, picking up on the parody, leaves us, too, wavering between an all-too-worldly Odysseus and an otherworldly Socrates. The text the Prologue announces is also a symposium of sorts – with feasts for the eyes and for the ears, and a whole series of inset speeches. And just as the reader of Plato’s dialogue finishes the “satyr drama” baffled at the spectacle, we, too, watch Lucius parade his bald head around Rome, experiencing a truly Platonic rather than a Winklerian ἀπορία.

⁶⁵⁵ See Drews 2012, 109.

CONCLUSION:

The question of how seriously we should regard Apuleius' Platonism and the *Metamorphoses'* didactic value has long vexed scholarship on this slippery author. As I set out to demonstrate in this dissertation, the problem was not solved, but merely complicated with Jack Winkler's influential, aporetic reading of the novel, which likens the *Metamorphoses* to a detective story embedding ambiguous clues for its readers. Much like the old Indian adage Winkler cites about the blind men holding different parts of the elephant, there is a cynicism to his interpretation that hides beneath the promise of an "open" reading. That is to say, just as only an enlightened viewer can see that there are blind men holding different parts of an elephant, and thus, can distinguish not only the elephant but also the cosmic joke on the blind men, there is a lack of sincerity in Winkler's attempt to make allowances for a serious interpretation. Rather than endorse this cynical (and anachronistic) interpretation, I have suggested that perhaps the text is still an elephant, but all of us readers holding the different parts are blindfolded rather than blind. Perhaps the interpretive games the text plays – rather than showing us a spectacle of deluded fools and encouraging us to point and laugh – are meant to teach us how to take the blindfolds off. In this interpretation, the process of reading the text could then be seen as a kind of escape from Plato's cave rather than merely a chance to take pleasure in the spectacle of a deluded voyeur.

Part of the reason we have failed to move beyond Winkler is that his aporetic interpretation offered us a false dilemma. After Winkler's faux-"open" interpretation, readers of Apuleius continued to set up camps of "serious" versus "satirical" exegesis. In

the “serious” philosophical school, a few continued to keep a tally of possible allusions to Plato,⁶⁵⁶ discovering a new intertext every few years; others tried to harmonize Platonic allusions with the brand of Middle Platonism that was *en vogue* in Apuleius’ milieu.⁶⁵⁷ But all those in the “serious” camp had difficulty avoiding the trap that Winkler set in stipulating the agenda of every reader’s experience with this text in the process of retrospective reading.

It was a false dilemma from the beginning since the terms “serious” and “parodic”, which scholars across the disciplines have desperately tried to keep quarantined in their separate conceptual and disciplinary spaces,⁶⁵⁸ cannot help but bleed together when one encounters Platonism and its afterlife. In an effort to keep Plato in his lofty tower of venerable philosophy, modern philosophers have tried to shed any associations between Plato and Apuleius, thinking that the founder of philosophy could not condescend to mingle with someone so imprecise as a Latin writer from Madauros. On the other side of the disciplinary boundary, we classicists have invented new theoretical categories – such as “self-fashioning” and “generic enrichment”⁶⁵⁹ – to explain away any philosophical references that may seem to lift this “low”, bawdy entertainment into a genre that would require us to deal with those philosophers. Perhaps we can let religious studies departments or Egyptologists look at book 11 and appreciate it as a curious cultural document. But we should probably keep this book away from the

⁶⁵⁶ See, e.g., see Kenney 1990a, Kenney 1990b, James 1998, Dowden 1998, Panayotakis 2001, and Winkler 2011.

⁶⁵⁷ See DeFilippo 1990 and O’Brien 2002. Fletcher 2014, whose work comes closest to my own interpretation in many ways, nevertheless uses a version of this “methodology”, at least insofar as he studies how Apuleius conceived of his own Platonism rather than how Apuleius wrote in a Platonic way.

⁶⁵⁸ The one-liner from John Henderson bears repeating: “Apuleius didn’t know how Classics departments would compartmentalize the interface between literature and philosophy” (Henderson 2001, 189).

⁶⁵⁹ See Harrison 2007 on “generic enrichment”.

philosophers, since they will only complain about Apuleius' imprecision and take away all of the pleasure.

What I have tried to do in this dissertation is change the way we ask the question about Platonism and "serious" philosophy in Apuleius. Rather than investigate whether Apuleius was trying to embed some kind of secret doctrine in his bawdy novel or whether he was merely sprinkling a little literary flavor in for his aesthetically inclined readers, I have argued that "serious" and "comic" are not mutually exclusive; and more importantly, that Plato recognized their codependency and authorized "serio-comic" parody even of his own work by enacting it in the dialogues. Even Plato's choice of form – a "low" conversational genre only in its inchoate phase of existence when Plato begins to write – represents a blend of different genres rather than a fixed genre. Plato uses poetry and prose; he alludes to Homer and tries to outdo him; and essential to my point, the sublime heights of Platonic philosophy are often brought down by a comically confused interlocutor. So also, Apuleius mixes into his generically "low" text allusions to epic and elegiac poetry; he blends in philosophical scenes from tragedy, and pits Homer against Plato in a competition for philosophical models. In a kind of reversal of Plato, just when we think the *Metamorphoses* cannot get more ridiculous, the ass begins to philosophize and we are forced to rethink how seriously we read this text.

To phrase the problem differently, we may meditate on the guiding metaphor Richard Fletcher adopts for his recent monograph on Apuleius' Platonism, namely the notion of a literary "body" of philosophical thought. In the opening of Apuleius' philosophical treatise on Plato, *de Platone et eius Dogmate*, Apuleius describes Plato's construction of a body of work: after inheriting different "branches of philosophy" (*de*

Plat. 1.3: *philosophiae membra*) from “diverse schools of thought” (*de diversis officinis*; lit. “workshops”), Plato constructed a *corpus*, which he then made perfect and admirable “by filing [it] down with reason and dressing it up in the most honorable guise of lofty speech” (*cum ratione limando tum ad orationis augustae honestissimam speciem induendo*). *Ratio* and *oratio*, in turn, become the fundamental binary for Fletcher’s interpretation, and the production of a “nuanced brand of aestheticized philosophizing”⁶⁶⁰ happens somewhere in between. My question – one that I pose in my forthcoming review of Fletcher’s book – is: what kind of a *corpus* did Plato construct? Is it a beautiful and well-proportioned body, such as those we find in the idealized figures of Classical Greek sculpture? Or was it a hybrid body, misshapen and malformed? Perhaps Apuleius’ metaphor in *de Platone* would point to the former, with the word *honestissima* suggesting a very beautiful form. But I think the history of interpretation – of which I take Apuleius to be a distinguished representative – would see the *corpus* of Plato’s work as fitting into the latter category.

In fact, the *Phaedrus* foregrounds such “misshapen” interpretation of Plato’s texts by resisting unified readings.⁶⁶¹ It constantly reopens the question of whether writing (or the soul) is hybrid or uniform.⁶⁶² Plato’s lack of generic or coherent uniformity is precisely what led one scholar recently to liken the Socrates of Plato’s dialogues to the Fat Rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud and to argue that both represent examples of

⁶⁶⁰ Fletcher 2014, 11.

⁶⁶¹ Fish’s *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (Fish 1972) gives a useful answer to the vexed question of the “unity of the *Phaedrus*”.

⁶⁶² Socrates’ famous refusal to rationalize a myth (*Phaedr.* 229c-230a) ends with the question of whether he is a hybrid creature (see Morgan 2012 on the “Typhonic question” and Hunter 1997 on its reception in later literature). The *Palinode* begins with what Kathryn Morgan calls a “theriomorphic image” (Morgan 2012) in as much as the metaphysical soul is a hybrid (246a-b). Cf. *Phaedr.* 264c, where Socrates compares a speech to a living creature, which must have all of its parts well-fit together (i.e., must not be a hybrid).

Menippean satire.⁶⁶³ Apart from the anachronism, the point nevertheless stands that the mixture of σπουδαῖον and γέλοιον elements in Plato makes it difficult simply to reduce Plato to a body of doctrines, as many philosophers have tried to do. If we spend all of our time “smoothing out” the rough edges of Plato’s *corpus* – to use Apuleius’ metaphor – we end up changing the “body”, transforming it from the notoriously fat, satyr-like Socrates into some kind of idealized ἄγαλμα that we are likely to misconstrue or misunderstand. One may even read Alcibiades’ speech in the *Symposium* as doing precisely that: transforming Socrates into a kind of commodity that one can treat simply as a holy ἄγαλμα. But Plato’s Socrates, seated between Aristophanes and Agathon at the *Symposium*, has one foot in the world of tragedy and one in the world of comedy.⁶⁶⁴ Indeed, in the greatest homage a student could pay, Apuleius re-enacts Plato’s own generic multiplicity and hermeneutic ambiguity, presenting readers with a Platonic rather than Winklerian ἀπορία.

In this dissertation, I have shown that Apuleius’ works – particularly the *Metamorphoses* – reveal a studied engagement with Plato on a much deeper level than was previously thought. Rather than finding a series of disconnected allusions to Plato, constructed only for *divertissement* and unmoored from any significant interpretive context, I have shown that Apuleius’ allusive technique is a highly adept reinterpretation of Plato. He refracts Platonic allusions through Roman poetry or contemporary literature, as Plato himself did with Greek poetry and with his own contemporaries. He also puts Plato in conversation with Homer, pitting Socrates and Odysseus against each other as

⁶⁶³ Boyarin 2009.

⁶⁶⁴ See Clay 1975 for this point.

exemplary models of philosophical travelers in search of knowledge – a technique Plato authorizes at many points in the dialogues (e.g., in the myth of Er, when Odysseus chooses a more Socratic life).⁶⁶⁵

But perhaps most importantly, Apuleius constructs a novel that masquerades as merely a pleasurable text, but suddenly changes the hermeneutic terms and demands a reinterpretation. Just like the *Phaedrus* – a dialogue that begins with some playful, euphemistic banter outside the walls of Athens but wanders unexpectedly into the realm of sublime transcendence – the *Metamorphoses* promises mere *divertissement* when Lucius embarks on his own journey outside the walls. Only after the text gives quite a bit of pleasure to the reader, it jarringly forces him or her into an unforeseen mode of exegesis. Perhaps the proportions of “pleasure” and “seriousness” are different in the *Metamorphoses*. But we should also note that the *Phaedrus* strangely ends with a claim to have been “playing” all along and “sowing speeches for the sake of pleasure”. Moreover, similarly to the *Republic* – with the myth of Er representing a call to start the text over again and undergo a process of “cyclical reading”⁶⁶⁶ – the *Metamorphoses* sends the reader back to the beginning for a retrospective reading, which invites the reader to reconsider his or her relationship to the text. Beyond his technique of allusion, the very act of inspiring a second reading has its roots in Plato rather than in narratology. Thus, hermeneutic ambiguity, instead of revealing the meaninglessness of texts, can serve a didactic function in forcing the reader to rethink positions and interpretations. This is

⁶⁶⁵ See my forthcoming paper on this scene in *Republic* 10 and its relationship to the conclusion of the *Metamorphoses*.

⁶⁶⁶ See Halliwell 2013 on “cyclical reading” and the myth of Er’s unforeseen “eschatological authority”, which sends the reader back to the beginning for a reconsideration of the questions in the dialogue.

the process of taking the blindfold off and realizing that the *corpus* we are holding onto is, in fact, an elephant.

In chapter 1, we saw this version of Platonism on display in the alternative models of life-choices posed to the audience in the *Apologia*. Specular gazing in that text straddles two opposing traditions of catoptrics – the Platonic self-knowledge tradition and the cosmetic adornment tradition. The reader is thus presented with the same choice Alcibiades faces in *Alcibiades I*, namely whether to gaze into the mirror of a ‘Socrates’ figure – in this case, Apuleius – or (ironically) to look upon a hideous figure with even more hideous insides. And that choice, I noted, is intimately connected to reading – whether one chooses to read books and how one does so.

Moving from the ethical-philosophical to the aesthetic tradition of mirror-gazing, I analyzed in chapter 2 how Apuleius takes to heart the Platonic challenge to consort with the courtesan *mimesis*. The erotic power of the *speculum* lies in its ability to tell stories and inspire the imagination. Then, I demonstrated how this plays out in the *Metamorphoses*, with Lucius indulging his curious imagination at every turn. At that end, I argued, the reader is invited to reconsider his or her own relationship to this text and to question his or her willingness to imagine the sights Lucius describes. Imagination can be dangerous and can trap you into participating in voyeuristic curiosity. But one can also learn from the danger Lucius undergoes and decide whether or not to follow Lucius further down his path.

In chapter 3, we encountered a similar Platonic, erotic mirroring – namely, that of the ἐραστής and ἐρώμενος from the *Phaedrus*. But here, too, Lucius misconstrues the terms of the idealized Platonic encounter and gets himself caught in a number of

questionable trysts. Watching Lucius fumble his way through Platonic exegesis in book 2, though, gives the reader an opportunity for identification and criticism. It, therefore, causes a recollection of the goal of the original Platonic scene. In Lucius' experience of Isis' *Haarspiegel*, in turn, the reader is once again given a choice between serious and pleasurable reading. Lucius is face-to-face with the goddess and he does not seem to fetishize particular body parts in the same way that he does with Photis. However, he does still focus on her hair and fail to look into her eyes. One can choose to see this as a "serious" conversion and a correct reading of Plato, or one can continue to read for parody and pleasure.

Lastly, in chapter 4, we considered how Alcibiades' encomium of Socrates as a mirror for viewers is reenacted in the Prologue of the *Metamorphoses*. Just as Socrates is transformed from εἰκόνες into ἀγάλματα θεῶν in Alcibiades' speech, so also, we are promised a spectacle of transformation from *figurae* into *imagines*. Moreover, in book 11, we encounter a vision of Lucius dressed up as a *simulacrum dei* – the precise translation of ἀγάλματα θεῶν. Through this refracted allusion to the end of the *Symposium*, the text invites us to consider how we want to relate to the main character of this novel – i.e., as a teacher through negative *exemplum* or as a commodity for visual consumption. Furthermore, it reminds us of the Platonic models of love – the sublime ἔρως of Diotima's speech and the parody of love we encounter in Alcibiades' speech – and it offers us a choice between the two.

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have used the mirror as an organizing principle for understanding Apuleius' method of allusion. This has yielded great results not only for recognizing Apuleius' engagement with Plato through the lens of a Roman

poetic and philosophical tradition but also for tracing a history of ancient interpretation of Plato. In this way, I believe this dissertation will be a useful resource not only for Apuleius scholars and experts in the Second Sophistic but also for Plato studies. That is, by identifying a method of ancient criticism of Plato – particularly in the work of a self-proclaimed Platonist – I believe that I have shown an alternative approach to interpreting Plato, which lends credence to the continental-philosophical school of interpretation. But more importantly, I think the mirror and its many manifestations in Apuleius give us access to a technique of serio-comic allusion to Plato, which can do more serious philosophical work than Apuleius scholars have been willing to acknowledge.

As I consider how to re-conceptualize this dissertation for a monograph, I plan to expand the bounds of my research to a larger conceptual category, which can encompass the work I have already done with the mirror, such as “vision” in the *Metamorphoses*. While I argued in the introduction that the *speculum* was the *locus* of choice in the *Apologia*, I believe that visual encounters more broadly construed throughout the *Metamorphoses* can be seen as “choice narratives”, which offer the possibility for a “conversion to philosophy”. Moreover, I plan to explore the deeper relationship between choice and conversion, as conversion may represent a series of choices or a process rather than a “Heracles-at-the-crossroads” kind of a moment. That is, perhaps Lucius stands at the crossroads with every visual encounter that titillates his curiosity. Everything he sees proffers a choice between pleasure and philosophy, and his decision to indulge his curiosity time and again strangely leads him down an alternate, more “serious” path. But the philosophical aspect of the novel comes into play when the reader is shown the same

visual pleasures that Lucius sees and forced to make his or her own choice. Perhaps that is where a “conversion to philosophy” is held out as a potential path.

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